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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

VOL. VIII.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO

HER DAUGHTER

AND

HER FRIENDS.

47674

AN ENLARGED EDITION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1806.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON:

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1811.

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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, &c.

[The Letters with an asterisk before the number are new Letters.]

LETTER DCCCLI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 9, 1689.

OUR two Grignans are returned, and I am delighted; their absence was tedious to me: your son is very handsome; I scarcely dare tell you so, as I know it does you harm. He is quite at home at court, is in raptures at being there, and is beloved by every one. The chevalier is perfectly satisfied with him. You are in the right, to prefer so many good qualities to the height of his person; but he is not short: he will, at least, be as tall as the chevalier; and his figure is, indeed, very agreeable and noble.

The abbé Têtu returns you a thousand thanks for your kindness; he has taken his vapours to Versailles; he has mentioned me to madame de Maintenon, respecting the representation of Esther: she gave him a more favourable answer than I deserved: I shall go to St.

Cyr on Saturday or Tuesday, I shall speak of you, and pity you for not being able to see this miracle; there will be one every year to console the absentees.

Friday, February 11.

I have informed you how well pleased M. de Charôst is with his master, and his master with him; and that M. de Lauzun's assertions have done no harm to any one but himself; he is nevertheless admitted as before; he is indebted for this, it is said, to the king of England. Esther continues to be performed. Madame de Caylus*, who was the Champmêlée of the performers, is not to act any more: she was too good and too affecting an actress; nothing but the pure simplicity of these little innocent souls is required; I will give you a very good account of every thing. The journey of madame de Chaulnes into Britany, is neither certain, nor near; I will inform you from time to time of the situation of this affair.

Mademoiselle d'Arpajon is now madame de Rouci: there is no talk of mademoiselle de la Marck's marriage with any one. Coislin's nuptials have not yet taken place, *this child is very difficult to christen.* You are too humorous upon the subject of your disagreeable sermon; it was enough to have set the convent on fire: in Provence, you are obliged to listen to strange preachers. We were under no uneasiness with respect to the tardiness of the courier; but we admired the chance that made him fail us on the very day that we were

* Madame de Caylus, daughter of M. de Villette, was, according to the fashion of Britany, the niece of madame de Maintenon. Her *Souvenirs*, written very pleasantly, are a faithful representation of the court of France at this period. Racine himself requested that she might take the part of Esther, and when it was thought necessary for her to resign it, he wrote for her the beautiful prologue of Piety.

more desirous than usual of receiving your letters; this made the chevalier say *God is God.*

Nothing, my child, is more certain than that all your illness proceeds from too much writing; you are aware of this, but you will not own it. You should walk a little, and take the air when it is fine weather; you have some very pleasant hours there, as we have here, and now, for instance, it is very mild: the month of February is much finer than the month of May; it must then be quite warm at Aix: let me advise you to take exercise, for it is death to be always confined to your box of a closet: the bare idea of it stifles me.

I supped last night at M. de Lamoignon's with the duchess du Lude, who was returned from court, madame de Coulanges, M. de Beauvais, and M. de Troyes. During supper, mademoiselle de Meri disguised your son with some old black petticoats, which were put on so well, and made him appear such a whimsical figure, that every one attacked him: he went to Monsieur's, who talked to him a good while without knowing him, as well as M. de Chartres; he answered every one very smartly: this will give him confidence, though, in truth, the chevalier will tell you he does not want it. Adieu, my best and dearest child; you are going to Marseilles, where you will see, in my opinion, the finest prospect in the world.

LETTER DCCCLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, February 14, 1689.

You dwell too much upon our uneasiness: it was not so extreme, when we found that no one had received letters from Provence, and we drew no other inference from it, than that the courier was not yet arrived. It is true, we were not pleased with your sore throat, and less so in the heavy night-dews of Aix than elsewhere, and that we were anxious to hear from you; the arrival of your letters gave us great pleasure; all this is very natural, and what you would have felt for us in the same case. You told us you had been to blame, that you had walked in the rain, which gave you cold; we were of your opinion, and as we took your word for your being to blame, we scolded you; upon this you scold us in turn, and we scold you again. We are far from dissuading you from walking; quite the contrary, my dear child; walk and take exercise, breathe the fine air you are in, do not be always immured in that dark palace*, nor in that box of a cabinet. Use your horses, or they will suffer as well as you: but shut yourself up when it is cold, when you have a sore throat; above all, do not repent of having informed us truly of the state of your health; we love truth, and therefore, my dear child, do not deceive us. M. du Bois, who is madame de la Fayette's physician and mine, wants to be yours also; he wants to write to you, to prescribe bleeding in the foot, and then to take periwinkle tea, which will restore your health and purify your blood: this, he says, is

* M. de Grignan lived at Aix in the old palace belonging to the counts of Provence.

sound treatment and a sure remedy. What grieves me most is, the deplorable state of your castle, as well from the violence of the winds, as the folly of the coadjutor, which is as fatal as the storm. How absurd is his conduct! to build and pull down like children, who are taught to work upon a little piece of canvas! He does exactly the same; he turns your house upside down; it is a little camp de Maintenon, the air of which will not be less fatal. You should really come to Paris, as there is no place where you are in which you can be secure. I do not believe M. de Grignan will suffer you to pass the summer in so disagreeable a situation, so destructive to your comfort, and so injurious to your health. I thus tell you freely what I think, that some place of safety should be procured for you. But what says M. de Grignan to this folly? I do not believe such conduct can be paralleled, to come and overthrow the castle of his fathers, and make it uninhabitable. I am going to write to M. de la Garde, I am persuaded he will be of our opinion.

I will not yet think of the departure of our poor Grignans, this sensibly affects me. I admire with you, the chevalier's resolution: the God of hosts will support him, for nothing less can. Madame de Chaulnes informs me, that I shall see Esther, that madame de Coulanges is to accompany me to Versailles, and that we shall have her equipage, for I go only upon this condition. I therefore restore the chevalier to his liberty, who was to have taken me after dinner: he is going to pay his court; I am delighted to think he can do so, but grieved that it must be by forsaking this little apartment, which is the only thing that makes this dismal hotel de Carnavalet bearable and alive: when he is away, every one keeps to his cell. Adieu, my best and dearest child, I embrace you a thousand times. Good heavens,

how rapidly do your sentiments pass into my heart! how truly are all your interests mine!

LETTER DCCCLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, February 16, 1680.

The chevalier is still at Versailles, but I expect him this evening. The marquis dined with me the other day; I conversed a good deal with him, and I can assure you, with much satisfaction. There is an air of truth and modesty in all he says, which does not in the least resemble the style of those thoughtless youths, who always appear fools or liars. He related to me all the fatigues of his journey to Philipsburg, which were very great; little d'Auvergne had the fever for four days, from mere weariness; the marquis is strong, and bears this first trial with great courage; he told me his other adventures, gave me an account of all the blows that were given on each side of him, and the contusion he received; and this, without ostentation, with a cool composed air of veracity, which is highly pleasing. I love to converse with him, and lose no opportunity of doing it; he supped yesterday with M. Turgot, and some young folks, at the rich little La Martilliere's; he returned at midnight. He is gone to the horse-market, being wholly taken up with his company; he will write to you to-night: he loves you, and knows your extreme affection; you do nothing for him to which he is not as sensible as you can possibly wish: it is not even necessary to rouse him upon this subject.

I dined yesterday with mademoiselle de Goileau; it was a company of wits; the abbé de Polignac, the abbé de Rohan, his doctor, abbé David, and Corbi-

nelli. After dinner they discussed, very pleasantly, the philosophy of your father Descartes; it was with great difficulty they could comprehend the motion God gives to a ball that is pushed by another; they would have it that the first communicated its motion, and you know how the abbé Polignac and Corbinelli exclaimed upon the occasion: this diverted me, and brought my dear little Cartesian to my remembrance, whom even I could understand so readily. From thence I went to madame de la Fayette's, where, by good fortune, I found only M. de Pomponne and M. de Barillon: we spent two hours very agreeably, and the more so, as we are seldom so fortunate. They say that the English parliament has made the prince of Orange king, because the former king has deserted his kingdom, *and broken the treaty between sovereign and subjects;* that his flight is an *abdication;* that they are determined to render the throne elective; and that the parliament would not allow the princess of Orange to be queen: these were the reports of yesterday. The chevalier will bring us news from Versailles. Some say with regard to the king of England's apathy, that by hearing him talk, it is easy to guess why he is here.

I shall not go to St. Cyr with M. de Lamoignon and madame de Coulanges, till Saturday; they have promised to return with me. I shall give you an account of this journey. Madame de Chaulnes has ceased to talk of hers; all I know is, that she will be very glad to take me with her; I leave her to disentangle her own thread. I shall seal my letter to-night, after the chevalier's return.

Eight o'clock at night.

The chevalier is not arrived. I suppose he wishes to stay till all the general officers are named, that he may know the destination of each. I have seen madame de

Chaulnes and madame de Coulanges; they are in raptures with Esther. The first embraces and loves you, and wants to take me with her into Britany; she will ask your leave; but as she is here on business, she will not set out so soon as was expected. Madame de Coulanges has avenged your cause with madame d'Estrées*. She told her, finding her silent upon the panegyric of Esther, "You certainly, madam, must have renounced praise of every kind, since you do not praise this piece." Madame d'Estrées is in a great rage with madame de Coulanges, who desires you to console yourself at not being praised by this lady, as she does not praise Esther.

LETTER DCCCLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, February 18, 1689.

The chevalier returned last night in tolerable health; he has an intermitting cold, which appears to me a gouty humour disguised. The marquis, after having given orders for his equipage, is, in turn, going to pay his court, and to spend the three flesh-days at Versailles. Madame de Coulanges is returned from thence and from St. Cyr; she was perfectly well received there, was seated next to madame de Maintenon, and has laid in an additional stock of praises and news. She will return there with me to-morrow; we wait for an answer, for the throng is so great, that I shall not think I am going till I am really upon the road. I informed you of what madame de Coulanges said to madame d'Estrées; the scene passed at M. de Croissi's; the

* Marie-Marguerite Morin, wife of Jean count d'Estrées, marshal and vice-admiral of France.

whole company burst into a laugh, which disconcerted the lady marshal, and emboldened madame de Coulanges, who said in a low voice to M. de Charôst: "Think of her never praising madame de Grignan any more than Esther." Presently the conversation turned upon M. de Charôst's flames. Madame de Coulanges mentioned madame de Brissac *, and you. His taste was approved, and *poor man!* was reiterated. Madame d'Estrées was applauding madame de Brissac's wit, when madame de Coulanges observed, "that as to wit, madame de Grignan was as much superior to her, as madame de Brissac's eyes were superior to madame de Grignan's." Every one agreed in this, and madame d'Estrées was again disconcerted. Canaples afterwards said, he had never seen any thing at all to be compared to you in beauty, that madame de Mazarin was of the same opinion, and that he had heard her say twenty times, that of all the faces she had ever seen, none pleased her so much as yours; that you had every grace, and every charm: this again was agreed to. Madame d'Estrées did not dare open her mouth, and this mute lioness, *with her paws across*, like the one you formerly saw, appeared so novel a prodigy, that no one could help talking of it, and madame de Coulanges was complimented for a miracle, which nothing but her vivacity could have wrought. Madame d'Estrées complained, in a whisper, of the reproach she had received about Esther, and that it was intended as an affront. It must be owned, indeed, that madame de Coulanges is an ungrateful woman, for the lady marshal never tore her eyes out.

The chevalier has written to you respecting Eng-

* Gabrielle-Louisa de Saint Simon, duchess of Brissac, died February 24, 1684.

land; we expect to hear what they have done, after having said that their king was no longer a king from the time he left the kingdom; we want to know whether they have elected another.

Nine o'clock at night.

At length we have received some news from England, which is very favourable. The prince of Orange is not yet master: things are not done in such haste, and war will not be declared in a moment, as it was supposed. It will not be so dreadful this year, as we are only upon the defensive: but you will have many pangs, many needless apprehensions, and you will not be diverted from them; you will not for a moment turn aside from the dragons, which I see are ready to devour you, and which, on your account, almost devour me; but our dragons will not bite, for I find, my dearest child, that I shall go into Britany with madame de Chaulnes; many reasons induce me to take this journey, besides those which gratify my heart. I must necessarily make some arrangements about the estate I have there, and which will dwindle to nothing, unless the capacity of the abbé Charier and my presence can restore it. I must therefore have the courage to undertake this journey, at the risk of my life, and the price of my affection, which would naturally make me fly, my dear countess, to you.

LETTER DCCCLV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, February 21, 1689.

It is certain that we are separated from each other by a grievous distance: this is enough to make us shudder; but what would it have been, if I had added to it the

road from hence to the Rocks or to Rennes? This, however, will not take place so soon. Madame de Chaulnes wishes to see the termination of several affairs, and I am only afraid she will set out too late, considering my intention of returning next winter, which I must do for several reasons; the first of which is, that I am convinced M. de Grignan will be obliged to return on account of his knighthood, and you cannot take a better opportunity to escape from your falling, uninhabitable castle, and come and pay your court a little with the knight of the order, who will not be a knight till that time. I paid mine the other day at St. Cyr, much more agreeably than I expected. We, that is, madame de Coulanges, madame de Bagnols, the abbé Têtu, and I, went on Saturday. We found our places kept; an officer told madame de Coulanges, that madame de Maintenon had ordered a place for her next herself: you see what honour is paid her. "You, madam," said he, "may choose." I placed myself with madame de Bagnols, in the second row behind the duchesses. Marshal de Bellefond came, and placed himself by choice at my right hand, and before us were the duchesses d'Auvergne, de Coislin, and de Sully. The marshal and I listened to the tragedy with an attention that was remarked, and bestowed some praises in a low voice, that were very well placed. I cannot tell you the extreme beauty of this piece: it is a performance not easy to represent, and is inimitable: it is the union of music, poetry, singing, and character, so perfect and complete, that there is nothing we wish to alter. The young ladies who represent kings and great personages, seem to be made on purpose. It commands attention, and the only unpleasant circumstance attending it is, that so fine a production should at last end. Every thing in it is simple and innocent, sublime and affecting: the sacred history is so faithfully adhered to, as to create

respect; all the airs corresponding with the words, which are taken from the Psalms or Ecclesiastes, and interwoven with the subject, are singularly beautiful; the taste and attention of the audience are the criterions of the merit of the piece. I was delighted with it, and so was the marshal, who left his place to inform the king how much he was gratified, and that he was seated next to a lady, who was very worthy of seeing Esther. The king approached our seat, and having turned round, addressed himself to me: "I am told, madam," said he, "that the piece has given you satisfaction." I replied, with perfect self-possession, "Sire, I am delighted; what I feel is beyond the power of words to describe." The king continued, "Racine has great talents." I replied, "Sire, he has indeed; and so have these young people: they enter into the subject, as if it had been their sole employment." "Ah! that is very true," he rejoined. And he then retired, leaving me the object of universal envy. As I was almost the only new spectator, the king took pleasure in observing my genuine admiration, which was without noise or parade *. The prince and princess came and spoke a word to me; madame de Maintenon flashed upon me like lightning, and then retired with the king. I answered every one, being in one of my happiest moods. We returned at night with flambeaux. I supped at madame de Coulanges's, to whom the king had also spoken with an air of affability that made him appear fascinating. I saw the chevalier at night. I related to him very naturally my little felicities, being unwilling to conceal them without a reason, as some people do. He was pleased, and here I conclude upon this head. I am sure he did not afterwards find in me any ridiculous vanity, or the

* By mentioning the circumstance to which she believed she was indebted for this little favour of the king, she proves sufficiently that she was not so much elated with it as has been pretended.

transports of a vulgar country bumkin. Ask him. M. de Meaux talked to me a good deal about you, and so did the prince. I pitied you for not being present; but how was it possible? one cannot be every where. You were at your opera at Marseilles. As Atys is not only too happy, but too charming, it is impossible you could have been tired with it. Paulina must have been surprised at such a spectacle; she has no right to wish for a more perfect one. I have so pleasing an idea of Marseilles, that I am persuaded you are amused there; and I will back the dissipations of that place against those of Aix.

But on that very Saturday, after the representation of Esther, the king was informed of the death of the young queen of Spain *, who was carried off in two

* Maria-Louisa of Orleans, daughter of Monsieur, and of Henrietta-Anne of England, his first wife.

Madame de la Fayette says in her Memoirs, that the queen of Spain was poisoned by a cup of chocolate. Dangeau affirms that it was by an eel pie. Madame, in her *Lettres Originales*, maintains that the poison was communicated by raw oysters.

Voltaire has denied this poisoning, as well as several others. It was a system of the historian. But he only confutes Dangeau's account, who had said, that three of the queen's women had died in consequence of eating of the same dish. Against this detail, he brings forward respectable authority.

Madame de la Fayette, who, in the life of Madame (Henrietta of England), had not dared to confirm the opinion of her having died by poison, joined with Voltaire in that of the queen of Spain, daughter of this princess.

The evidence of Madame (de Bavière) would be stronger, if she were not so partial, and did not show herself so ready to give credit to every crime. What she adds, that it was two of the queen's French waiting women who poisoned her, is very improbable.

She says, however, that it was the earl of Mansfield who procured the poison; a circumstance which agrees with the common report of that period.

In fact, all the letters and memoirs of contemporary writers agree in

days, by a violent vomiting: this has very much the air of foul play. The king informed Monsieur of it the next day, which was yesterday; great was the grief upon the occasion; Madame wept bitterly, and the king retired in a flood of tears.

It is said there is good news from England; not only the prince of Orange is not elected king or protector; but he is given to understand, that he and his troops have nothing to do but return: this shortens our solicitude. If this news should gain ground, our Britany will be in less agitation, and my son will not have the mortification of commanding the nobility of the viscounty of Rennes, and the barony of Vitré. They have chosen him, against his will, to be at their head. Any one else would be greatly elated with this honour; but he is vexed at it, not liking, under any title whatever, to take the field in that way.

Your son went to Versailles, to amuse himself during the carnival; but he found the court in grief for the queen of Spain. He would have returned ere this, if his uncle were not upon the point of going to meet him. This is a very melancholy and mournful carnival. I

saying, that the council of Spain, devoted to the emperor and the prince of Orange, and resolved to enter into the league against France, wished to remove a queen, who was too good a Frenchwoman, and who, governing her husband, was too great an obstacle to the projects of war that had been formed.

It is true, that such a report, at the moment of the breaking out of hostilities, cannot pass for an historical proof; but it must be owned, that it very nearly resembles truth.

We may also say, that the recital of the duke of St. Simon, who had been ambassador in Spain, not only confirms that of Madame, but adds many circumstances to it. According to him, the countess de Soissons, who was then at Madrid, administered the poison, suborned by the earl of Manfield. (See the note of the letter June 27, 1676, on the death of the first Madame, and the letter of the 10th of May, 1703, which follows in the order of its date.)

supped last night at M. Camus's, where I met the duchess du Lude, madame de Coulanges, madame de St. Germain, the chevalier de Grignan, M. de Troyes, and Corbinelli. We were very gay; talked of you with great regard, esteem, and regret for your absence; in short, with a lively remembrance of you: you will come and renew these feelings.

Madame de Durfort is dying of a malignant fever, and madame de la Vieuville of the small-pox. Adieu, my beloved child; of all the provincial commanders, be assured M. de Grignan's situation is the best.

LETTER DCCCLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Ash-Wednesday, February 23, 1689.

My dear child, the life you lead at Marseilles delights me. I love that city, which resembles no other in the world. Ah! how well I understand Paulina's admiration! How natural, how just, how novel, all her surprise must be! How pretty I think her! how pleasing to me is the mind which my fancy gives her! It seems to me that I love her, and that you do not love her enough. You want her to be all perfection. Did she engage for this when she left her convent? You are not just: who is there without faults? Do you, in conscience, expect her to be free from them? Whence can this hope arise? It is not in nature: you wish her then to be a *prodigious* prodigy, such as was never before seen. If I were with you, I think I should do her some good offices, merely by correcting your imagination a little, and by asking you, if a young girl, who thinks of nothing but pleasing you and improving herself, who loves and fears you, and who has a great share of understanding, is

not in the first rank of excellence? These are the dictates of my heart in favour of my dear Paulina, whom I love, and whom I entreat you immediately to embrace, for my sake. Add to this her good conscience, which makes her renounce the compact, when she sees the jugglers perform their necromancies. This life, though agreeable, must have fatigued you: it is too much for you, my dear child; you go to bed late, and you rise early: I have had apprehensions for your health. The reason I do not talk to you of mine is, that it is as I wish yours to be, and that I have nothing to say upon the subject.

You think of me always too kindly: your reasonings are good respecting my journey into Britany; I will consider of it; and if madame de Chaulnes does not go—for how can we tell? we must see how the orders stand—if she does not go, I will go by myself to Nantes, where I will send for the abbé Charier, as it is impossible to leave the estate there any longer in its present confusion. We have time enough to consider, till Easter, for we shall not think of setting out during Lent. I believe I told you that we supped last Sunday at M. le Camus's, the lieutenant of police: on Monday we supped in a friendly way at M. de Lamoignon's, with Coulanges, and the abbé Bigorré; on Tuesday at madame de Coulanges's with madame de Chaulnes and *the Divinities*, without ceremony, and retired at eleven. This morning I was at mass, and am now writing quietly to my beloved child. Such is the life of your poor mamma, whilst the chevalier and *Puss* are at Versailles, where all amusements have ceased, out of respect to the sorrow of Monsieur and Madame *. This poor queen of Spain, a year older than her mother, has died, in a strange man-

* Elizabeth-Charlotte, palatine of the Rhine, mother-in-law of the queen of Spain.

ner, as she did: she was taken, on the 10th of this month, with such an excessive vomiting, that no medicine could afford her relief, and till the 12th at noon, when she died, she had not a moment's respite. M. de Rabenac writes, that nothing is more worthy of admiration than her courage, resolution, and sentiments of Christianity; that she told the king she had no regret at quitting life, that she was dying a natural death, though she had just before said otherwise, like the late Madame *; but, like her too, she repented having said so: in short, no mention is made of poison; a word that is forbidden at Versailles, and throughout France: but the poor princess is dead, and this is a real loss in the present state of our affairs. Those of England are strangely spoken of; after great opposition, that madman, the prince of Orange, is elected king, and has been crowned: the contrary report prevailed a week ago; but thus it is with the English.

Madame de la Vieuville† is dead of a mortification, surprised, no doubt, to find herself so soon by the side of her father-in-law at the Minimes (of the Place Royale).

LETTER DCCCLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, February 25, 1689.

Our two Grignans returned from Versailles, an hour after I sealed my letter. The chevalier will inform you how this little captain took his leave, how graciously the king regarded him, and how he was questioned respecting his company, and his journey to Chalons. He

* See the note in the preceding letter.

† Anne Lucy de la Motte-Houdancourt.

will have the honour of departing the first, and of setting the example. This zeal in a young novice is very becoming; he jests very prettily with those who ask why he goes so soon; he tells them he has a colonel who drives him; the colonel * defends himself very well on his part; and I can assure you nothing can be better, or do them so much honour at so little expense. He has no business here: he is delighted, and eager to become a good officer; he will have time enough to rest himself at Philippeville, and his horses also; and he will be quite fresh when he begins to march. I am become quite avaricious of this *Puss*; which, you know, is always the case when the time of departure draws near. He takes his meals with me; I shall take him to dine with madame de Chaulnes and madame de Coulanges, to bid them adieu, and shall husband the seven or eight days we have still to be together. Now, my dear child, do not ramble to a distance to seek anxiety; do not allow your fancy to make you uneasy; there is no reason for it at present: your son will be as well in his garrison as here; it is but fifty leagues off.

Talk to me of yourself, my dear love: your life at Marseilles appeared to me very agreeable. For my part, I acknowledge I should not have sense enough to be dull and weary in the midst of the sincere demonstrations of respect you receive in your government: the chevalier and I never agree upon this head. I know that this must be too much for a constancy, and you must come and shake it off a little in this part of the world: but I have many in my eye, who would not think these honours, paid once a year by persons of rank and quality, at all disagreeable. I have seen them, and have been surprised and affected: but every one has his taste. I will stake the pretty whirlwind of Mar-

* The chevalier de Grignan.

seilles, with the knights*, the opera, and the jugglers, not forgetting Paulina's astonishment, against the visits and the ladies of Aix. Tell me who are your ladies of the bedchamber; for there are always favourites.

The king of England is going over to Ireland; this, at least, is the report: but I vouch for nothing this year; it is the harvest of lies. The court goes into mourning to-day for the queen of Spain. I shall finish this letter to-night, after I have received yours.

Here comes your letter of the 18th, my dear child; but say nothing to M. de Grignan, for he would laugh at me. I am delighted to find that you are arrived at Aix; I recollect there is a vile precipice which extends a great way along the road, and which makes me ill to think of it. Your leagues are insupportable; it is as far from Marseilles to Aix, as it is from Paris to Meaux; this, I maintain; I therefore thank you for informing me of your safe arrival. You must have been very much fatigued in having to sup with the archbishop, instead of going to bed. I am sensible of the pleasure you give M. de Grignan, by appearing in public with so good a grace: this complaisance entitles you to as much from him. He was fearful here that you should bury yourself at home, and be plunged in grief; but I said to him, "Let her alone, sir, she will do nothing amiss, nor any thing ridiculous:" and, in fact, the manner in which you live is noble and full of good sense, considering the situation you are in. How do all these wonders agree with you? for they must be attended with some bodily pain. I persevere in the resolution of going into Britany, though my heart strongly inclines me to visit you: but I am not worthy of being

* When madame de Sévigné was at Marseilles in 1672, she considered the numerous officers of the galleys (almost all knights of Malta, who came to see M. de Grignan) as one of the chief ornaments of that city.

your mother; you would have been a true Roman, with the love you bear your country. Adieu, my best love, adieu, my dearest child. I could write till to-morrow; my ideas, my pen, my ink, every thing flies; but my letter must go to the post, and I must not overwhelm you.

The king of England has dined here with M. de Lauzun; after dinner he visited Mademoiselle. It is said he is going over to Ireland, and that he has given the order of the garter to M. de Lauzun. I shall answer for nothing this year, but that I love you dearly.

LETTER DCCCLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, February 28, 1689.

The chevalier went yesterday to Versailles to know his fate; for, not finding himself in the lists that have appeared, he is anxious to know, whether he is reserved for the dauphin's army, which has not yet been mentioned. As he has said that he was capable of serving, he has a right to think that he has not been forgotten; at all events it will not be his fault; he is one of the best. It is certain that the king of England set out this morning for Ireland, where he is expected with impatience: he will be better there than here. He will traverse Britany with the swiftness of lightning; and go straight to Brest, where he will find marshal d'Estrées, and ships and frigates ready: he takes with him 50,000 crowns. The king has given him sufficient arms for 10,000 men. As his Britannic majesty took leave, he said with a smile, "That arms for himself were the only things that had been forgotten:" our king gave him his: the heroes of romance never did any thing more gallant than this action. What will not this brave but un-

happy king do, with arms that have ever been victorious? Behold him then with the casque and cuirass of Rinoldo and Amadis, and all our most celebrated knights errant; I will not say of Hector, for he was unfortunate. There is not an offer that can be suggested, that our king has not made him; generosity and magnanimity have been carried to their height. M. d'Avaux * is to go with him; he set out two days ago. You will ask why M. de Barillon † was not the person. The reason is, that M. d'Avaux, being perfectly acquainted with the affairs of Holland, will be more useful, than he who is acquainted only with those of England ‡. The queen has shut herself up at Poissi with her son: she will be near the king, and the fountain-head of intelligence. She is overwhelmed with grief, and suffers from a nephritic complaint, that makes it feared she has the stone: she is really to be pitied. You see, my dear child, it is the rage of talking, that makes me write all this; the chevalier and the gazette will give you better information than I can do. Your son has lived with me; I never leave him, and he is satisfied. He is going to take leave of the little mesdemoiselles Castelnau; but his heart has yet no attractions: his duty and his regiment take up all his time; he is delighted at the thoughts of going, and of setting the example to others. There is no particular object yet in view, no place to be besieged, nor any battle to be fought; we are only to stand upon the

* John-Anthony de Mesmes, count d'Avaux, nephew of Claudius de Mesmes, also count d'Avaux, both celebrated for their superior talents in negociation, and for uncommon qualities of heart and mind.

† M. de Barillon had been ambassador to England.

‡ The reason assigned here for the preference that was given to M. d'Avaux, is not the true one: d'Avaux had the merit of having foreseen and announced every event that happened, whereas de Barillon had the misfortune to be wrong in every thing; this was the real cause of the preference.

defensive; but then so powerfully upon the defensive, as to make our enemies tremble: never did a king of France see 300,000 men on foot: such spectacles were confined to the kings of Persia; every thing is new, every thing miraculous.

I went with the marquis yesterday to take leave of madame de la Fayette, and to sup with madame de Coulanges. I sometimes take him to M. de Pomponne's, sometimes to madame de Vins's, and the marchioness d'Huxelles's: to-morrow he will go to madame du Puidu-fou's and madame de Lavardin's; and will then wait for his uncle, and set out towards the end of the week. But, my dear child, do not be cast down at this journey, for it merits no other name at present. Let us talk a little of Paulina, my pretty amiable little grand-daughter: I could never have supposed she was of an untoward disposition, I thought her all sweetness. But do not dishearten her; she has sense, she loves you, she loves herself; she wishes to please; this is the way to amendment, and I assure you it is not in childhood that we correct ourselves: this is the work of reason; vanity, so fatal in many instances, is admirable in this. Endeavour therefore to reason with her, without anger, without scolding, without humbling her, for these are revolting, and I will answer for it, that you will make her a little prodigy. Consider this as an affair of honour and conscience; teach her to be clever; it is a great thing to have inclination and capacity, which she has.

Esther is not yet printed. I had a great desire to say a word or two about you to madame de Maintenon; it was at my tongue's end: she advanced a step or two to speak to me; but as the king, after what I told you had passed, withdrew to his apartment, she followed him. I had only time to evince my thanks and acknowledgment by gestures: it was a whirlwind. M. de Meaux

inquired after your health. I said to the prince as he passed, " How I pity those who are not here!" he heard me, but every thing was in such bustle, that it was impossible to arrange an idea. Racine is going to write another tragedy; the king has acquired a taste for theatrical productions, and nothing else will be seen: but the history of Esther is singular; neither Judith *, Ruth, nor any other subject, could succeed so well.

Madame de Chaulnes is gone to Versailles; perhaps she is to assist hér sister-in-law † in receiving the queen at Poissi. Nothing has yet transpired with respect to Britany, we must wait till the commandant is appointed ‡. You are very happy that no one comes to assist you in the execution of your office. M. de Grignan will give chace to those demons §, who issue from the mountains, and then return to their holes. There are many in Languedoc; M. de Broglio ‖ and M. de Basville ¶ are in pursuit of them; they disappear like ghosts; you likewise see armies in the provinces, that will not be of the least utility.

The king of England yesterday invested M. de Lauzun with the order of the garter; a kind of oath was read, which constitutes the ceremony; the king placed his

* The abbé Têtu gave Boyer the subject of Judith, and even assisted him in a work worthy of the charming epigram of Racine, ending with these lines:

Je pleure, hélas! pour ce pauvre Holoferne,
Si mechamment mis à mort par Judith.

I weep, alas, for this poor Holofernes,
So wickedly put to death by Judith!

† Charlotte d'Ailli, sister of M. de Chaulnes, prioress of Poissi.
‡ The duke de Chaulnes, or marshal d'Estrées.
§ The Hugonots.
‖ Commandant in Languedoc.
¶ Intendant of Languedoc.

collar on the other side of ours, and a St. George, that he had from the late king his father, which is set with diamonds, and worth at least 10,000 crowns. While the king of England was at Mademoiselle's, M. de Lauzun went to madame de la Fayette's with this ornament; madame de la Fayette gazed at the blue ribbon, and as she knew he had not that of France, she did not comprehend this masquerade; she was silent upon the subject, and so was he. At length he began to laugh, and told her what had passed. The king of England must, however, think himself obliged to him, since he treats him so well. The king told M. de Lauzun, that this order was not to exclude his own: he will therefore, that they may not cross each other, put the order of France under his coat, and let the St. George hang to his side by a blue ribbon. This little man's star is very extraordinary.

Eight o'clock at night.

I am just returned from M. de Pomponne's; I have heard him reason upon the present state of affairs, he thinks that all the high mountains are coming to a level. The Irish business goes on admirably, and so completely occupies the prince of Orange, that there is nothing to fear upon our coasts. Even the lords, who have elected the prince of Orange against their will, have protested against the violence of the lower house, alleging that a king cannot be elected until the throne be juridically declared vacant. All this is very good; no vigorous measures need be taken: if Spain were to declare, we should arm rather upon the side of Pampelune and Navarre than of Flanders, as this would be a most certain means of gaining the latter. In short, it appears that we are so strong and so powerful, that we have nothing to do but to keep in our places, and make

a good appearance. Let this be your mode of reasoning, till, at least, you see something to the contrary, and let not your trouble begin too soon; it is a pity to waste your grief in this manner. I wished you had been present at this conversation. This is all the news I have heard. The chevalier will come to-morrow. The abbé Bigorré has just informed me that the president Barantin fell down dead this morning while sitting in his place in the grand council. Adieu, dear child; do not amuse yourself by answering me with a long letter. Consider how many sentences there are to which you have only to say *amen*. I have a thousand friendly compliments for you from M. de Lamoignon, madame de Lavardin, and madame de Mouci; every one is still proud of your remembrance.

LETTER DCCCLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 2, 1689.

Shrove-Tuesday is not an indifferent day to Paulina: I cannot help scolding you, my dear child, for not having sent her prettily to the good Langlée's, to dance a little with mademoiselle d'Oraison: what harm would there have been in allowing her this little pastime? I am sure this dear child is interesting, that she has a good air, a good carriage, and even eclipses more regular beauties. I scold you also for reading all your letters before you go to bed. I know it is scarcely possible to keep them till the next day; but you must calculate upon not sleeping, for there will often be many things in them that will create disagreeable thoughts; nor would it be a whit better, if they contained nothing but reflections and news: before the imagination has

sifted the contents, the night is gone: as you know all this to be true, settle the matter for the benefit of your health. I took my marquis yesterday to madame du Pui-du-fou's; she grows very old. M. de Mirepoix, who had been there once before to see me, came a second time, and each time his whole conversation turned upon his condescension in marrying to please his family. The little puppet is dying of the spleen in this dreary abode. I afterwards went to madame de Lavardin's, to whom I remembered you: she embraced your son several times: she loves you dearly, and so does madame de Mouci; but this last is in the third heaven; she has lost a sister, who was a nun, for whom she had very little regard: I shall make your compliments to her and her learned brother*. The chevalier arrived last night, and is very well; he will be employed, but he knows not yet in what country; I admire his courage. Your son is a very agreeable and a very pretty fellow; he already manages all his affairs, gives orders, makes purchases, and keeps his accounts: it is a pity his father had not done the same. The chevalier will inform you what our king said to the king of England at his taking leave; "Sir, it is with grief I see you depart; yet I never wish to see you again: but if you return, be assured you will find me the same as you leave me." Could any thing better have been said? He has loaded him with every thing, great and small; two millions of money, ships, frigates, troops, officers, and M. d'Avaux, who makes, upon the occasion, one of the most brilliant figures in the world: I will venture to say, that there is no one who would not be proud of the employment, who would not think it worthy of a man thoroughly acquainted with business, and capable

* Achilles de Harlay, then attorney-general, and afterwards first president in the parliament of Paris, in November, 1689.

of giving advice: if M. de Barillon is not sensible of this, he is very happy. I now come to the minutiæ, such as toilets, camp-beds, services of plate, plain and gilt, arms for his person, which are the king's; arms for the troops in Ireland, and those who go with him, who are very numerous; in short, generosity, magnificence, and magnanimity, were never so strikingly displayed as upon this occasion. The king is not willing that the queen should go to Poissi: she will see very little company; but the king will take care of her, and she will receive news without intermission. The parting of the king and queen of England rent the hearts of all the spectators; nothing but tears, sighs, lamentations, and swoonings, were to be seen or heard, which is very easy to be comprehended. Such is his destiny; he has a good cause; he is the protector of the true religion, and his courage will allow him no other alternative than conquest or death.

Did I inform you, that the president Barantin died upon his seat in the great council two days ago? He dropped down dead suddenly. Will his wife, who laughs incessantly, laugh on this occasion? The good La Troche is dead; write to his wife. Madame de Nesle is brought to bed of a son; I know not whether the *woodcock* * is pleased with it, for she has now no love for any one but the count de Mailli, who is gone with the king of England to Brest: this office would have done honour to a duke or a prince. M. de Duras has been received as a duke in parliament, and is about to command the finest army that ever was seen in France.

I am just returned from madame de la Fayette's, where I found M. Courtin, M. de la Trousse, and the

* Jane de Monchi Montcavrel, grandmother of the marquis de Nesle, and mother of Louis count de Mailli.

duke d'Estrées: the conversation was political. M. d'Avaux is ambassador extraordinary to the king of England: he has the care of the troops and the finances; in short, he is the soul of the undertaking, and the man in whom all confidence is placed. I dined with your son at madame de Chaulnes's, who desires to be remembered to you in the kindest manner; we shall not set out till after Easter. Ah, my dear child, nothing attracts me to Britany but business alone; neither my son, nor his wife, is now at the Rocks; they have an attachment to Rennes, where their mother is. My son will, perhaps, be with these noblemen. The retirement and solitude of the Rocks are no longer agreeable to them; they will remain there out of complaisance to me, and I shall give them all their liberty in the month of October. I have not the least doubt that you will come this winter to Paris with M. de Grignan; I shall, however, be with you, be it where it may. I think M. de la Rochefoucault's maxim is true, which says, "Afflictions are thrown equally into every condition of life:" some, however, appear very grievous. My dear child, adieu: you make me laugh, when you say you have no longer any wit; you imagine you have no further occasion for it; but knock ever so gently at that door, and you will find it answered. Do not find fault with your letters, they abound with happy turns and brilliant ideas. I embrace you a thousand times.

LETTER * DCCCLX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Wednesday, March 2, 1689.

What things, sir, may not be said! what a period in the history of our monarch is the manner in which he has received the king of England! the presents with which he has loaded him in setting out from hence for Ireland; vessels at Brest, where he now is, frigates, troops, officers; the count d'Avaux as ambassador extraordinary and adviser, and who is also to have the care of the troops and money; two millions on his departure, and as much afterwards as he wants! Besides these great things, he has given him his arms, his helmet, his cuirass, which cannot fail of bringing good fortune to him. He has given him arms sufficient for ten or twelve thousand men. And as to little conveniences, they are innumerable: post-chaises admirably made, calashes, carriage and saddle horses, services of gold and silver, toilets, linen, camp-beds, magnificent swords of state, swords for service, pistols; in short, every thing of every kind that can be thought of; and in embracing him as he bid him adieu, he said to him, "You cannot say that I am not affected at your departure: I own to you, however, that I wish never to see you again: but if, unfortunately, you should return, be assured you will find me as you leave me." Nothing could be better said, nothing more just: generosity, magnificence, magnanimity, were never exercised as they have been by his majesty on this occasion.

We hope that the Irish war will be a powerful diversion, and prevent the prince of Orange from tormenting us, by descents upon our coast; and thus our three hundred thousand soldiers, our armies so well stationed every where, will only serve to make the king feared, without any one daring to attack him.

This is a time of political discussion: I should very much like to hear you talk over these great events. I enclose the opinion of a respectable upholsterer on the questions, respecting furniture, of madame de Moulceau: but, whatever he may say of a gold fringe and double taffeties for curtains, and though there are many such here, nothing is so pretty, so suitable, or so cool for the summer, as curtains made of these beautiful taffeties single, and tapestry the same. I have seen them at several houses, and admire them exceedingly: every thing must be looped up, and plaited, as he has directed: for the other kind of furniture, you must have damask or brocade.

Our *friend* will give you an account himself of what he knows, but what it is I do not know; for, since he has resided here, I never see him; and when I ask him the reason of this, he replies, that I am *too near*. This pleasantry is a truth. If I did not sometimes contrive to stumble upon him, when he is leaving the house to attend one or other of the three or four dinners to which he is daily invited, he would be a stranger to my eyes. I am obliged to wish him again at the fauxbourg de St. Germain, to resume the intercourse that has subsisted between us for more than thirty years. In this conduct, sir, is there any thing that any jealousy can lay hold of? Yours will be fully satisfied.

M. de la Trousse has taken a milk diet all the winter, and is much better: it is supposed he will have a separate command in Poiteu. There are three thou-

sand infantry, and all together five or six armies; but no one yet knows precisely what post he is to have: my daughter's is in Provence, mine will soon be in Britany.

The little marquis has a beautiful company in his uncle's regiment: and I shall every where preserve for you the truest esteem, accompanied by a regard which must make the jealous tremble.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I RESIDE at the hotel de Carnavalet, purely to revenge myself upon you; but it must surprise you to read that I never see her, now I live in the same house with her. I hope you do not believe this, for it is incredible; and that you will consider the charge as a wicked artifice. The public news is important, and worthy of your attention; but as I am accustomed to impute every event to God, I admire him equally in all, and look no where else. Adieu, my friend; I am wholly yours; jealous, or tranquil, it is all the same.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

A THOUSAND respects to your lady; I wish I could render her greater service.

Does madame **** dislike the action that is to be brought against her?

LETTER DCCCLXI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, March 4, 1689.

The chevalier and I have been uneasy, since we have found at what time you receive our letters, knowing that if you read them before you go to bed, we affectionately prevent you from sleeping, just three times a week. Tell us the truth; if you do not, we shall keep to this opinion. It is impossible, after having read our volumes, supposing they even contained nothing dismal or disagreeable, to avoid thinking upon the news we send you: less than this is sufficient to deprive a person of sleep, whose rest is so easily destroyed as yours: and, if the quick circulation of your blood, and the keen air of Provence, be taken into the account, you will find, that those who love you most in the world, make you ill, and stab you regularly every post-day. This idea, my dear child, is too well founded, not to make me uneasy, and admire what injury our love may occasion to those who are the dearest to us. This, however, is an evil without a remedy, and which must be left to God, like every thing else.

M. de Lauzun has refused, it is said, to go to Ireland with the king of England, but he has hinted, that he might be induced to go, if he were created a duke. It is certain that their majesties of St. Germain spoke of this; I doubt whether this sort of bargaining may not be detrimental to M. de Lauzun.

Your dear child is again to-day giving orders about all his affairs. He is in high spirits, and will set out to-morrow, with the finest weather in the world: though

it be only a journey, I cannot help feeling a weight at my heart. I saw Jarzé yesterday; he is cheerful, notwithstanding his misfortune *; he conversed with me for nearly two hours, and related to me all his melancholy adventure. The king asked him the particulars, from beginning to end; it is a very piteous story; he has suffered a great deal, and still feels pain in the hand he has lost.

We have just received your letters of the 25th; you are very much disgusted with the vile sermons: you have, indeed, great reason; it is a martyrdom; in this respect, your dignity is somewhat inconvenient: but must you attend every day? This is a hardship; I will lay your complaints before father Gaillard. I sometimes go to hear the sermons at St. Gervais, with madame de Coulanges, who never loses one; father Soanen † is an excellent preacher. Father Gaillard ‡ shines at St. Germain de l'Auxerrois; but where do they obtain such preachers as hold forth in your country? You cannot hesitate with regard to your returning at Martinmas; for instead of going back to Lambesc and Aix, you must come and defend your petition; you alone can do it; arrange every thing for that purpose. I cannot tell you how to act; but as you have

* The marquis de Jarzé had his hand taken off by a cannon-shot at the siege of Philipsburg.

† John Soanen, a celebrated preacher of the Oratory, afterwards bishop of Senez. It was he who, more than thirty years afterwards, was condemned by the council of Embrun, over which cardinal de Tencin presided, an assembly as ridiculous as its president was calumniated. Soanen was a very obstinate Jansenist, but, with this exception, a very respectable man. "This council, this sentence, and particularly the president of the council, offended all France; and, at the end of two days, not a syllable was said upon the subject."

Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.

‡ A celebrated Jesuit preacher.

long subsisted on impossibilities, you must again take from this miraculous stock: you see plainly, that you must not leave your work imperfect. I shall then set out with the pleasing hope of seeing you in the winter; this delightful prospect will comfort me during a journey that I certainly do not take for pleasure.

So you want to persuade me, that you have lost all your wit, and that you are now incapable of writing! but your letters do not convince me; you must give me other proofs, as Bussy said. I embrace my dear daughter, and my daughter's daughter: ah, good heavens! this is going a great way: never bring old age or sickness upon yourself; you know where this throws me. The chevalier sends you Esther; let us have your opinion of it.

We shuddered at the horrid story of the criminal; what a shocking death! this man is certainly summoned to the torments of hell: we may say, with St. Augustin, "If he had been one of us, he would have remained with us." I wish, however, that a few days had been allowed him for repentance, if he would have repented: it is a dreadful thing to be strangled in the midst of blasphemies.

LETTER DCCCLXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, March 7, 1689.

If you had seen your dear son set out on Saturday, you would have wept as well as we; it was impossible to help it; but as there is yet no talk of hostilities, we ought to consider it merely as a journey. He looked well, and was in good spirits; he laughed at us, for he is wholly taken up with his company, which is in very

good condition. M. du Plessis is gone with him, and will take particular care of him, till he has delivered him into the hands of his uncle's officers. All the young people follow the good example of your son; I advise you to take courage like the rest, and to believe that God will preserve him to you: you stand in need of some resolution to complete the business relative to M. d'Aiguebonne; this thorn in your son's foot must be removed. You may still see a part of the things which you regretted you could not see. Racine is beginning a new piece for next winter: it is either Jephtha or Absalom*. You will go to St. Cyr, and see M. de Grignan received into the order of knighthood; you will, at least, find the queen of England, who will make up to you for not seeing her husband; and, if it please God, we shall meet again, after having each made our circuit. I can easily conceive that you will feel our separation; I shall feel it very keenly on my side, I assure you. I consider this Britany as a long stretch, a tiresome journey, to which business impels me. We shall not set out till after Easter. If we meet with any thing that will do for your son, we shall not fail to obtain it: in short, we shall see what Providence has in store for us.

LETTER DCCCLXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 9, 1689.

MADEMOISELLE d'Alerac is gone for a few days to the Feuillantines; there is frequently a coolness between her and madame d'Usez †; I believe, however, she will

* It was neither; it was Athalia, Racine's last production, and his best.

† Julia-Maria de Sainte-Maure, duchess d'Usez, first cousin of mademoiselle d'Alerac.

return with this duchess to Versailles: the poor girl is not happy, her stars are not so propitious as those of mademoiselle de Coislin *, who seems at present perfectly well disposed towards M. d'Henrichemont; the marriage articles were signed on Monday, conditionally, that if one article were not altered, the contract should be void. It was thought prudent not to return without signing them, lest the world should laugh at their expense; and this plan was adopted, which appears a very strange step, on the day a whole family is assembled, and when every thing in general is satisfactory. M. de Coislin is extremely happy in expedients in time of need. A courier was, however, dispatched to Rome upon this occasion†.

M. de Grignan's letter has made me tremble, for I can neither bear the sight nor the thought of a precipice; how horrible, that he will have to pass over one, and be continually within a hair's breadth of a shocking death! I do not comprehend how he can be induced to go into a country, where the very bears cannot exist. The mesdemoiselles de la Charce are, indeed, very pleasantly situated; what a charming house! But what grieves me is, that I fear these *demons* (the Hugonots), who disappear when they are terrified, and see M. de Grignan, will start up again with the same alacrity as soon as he is gone; in which case, he would have this unpleasant business continually upon his hands. The king, in reality, is well served: neither life nor fortune is considered, when his pleasure is the question. If we were as well disposed towards God, we should be saints indeed.

The chevalier and I have been laughing at the diffi-

* Magdelan-Armande du Cambout, daughter to Armand du Cambout, duke de Coislin.

† To obtain dispensations.

culty we had to understand why, at Versailles, you returned home to say your prayers. "What does she mean?" we asked each other. "Do you understand this?" "No." "Nor do I." As if you had been beside yourself, or had said one thing for another: in short, I never was seized with such strange stupidity. Though I know you are always disposed to devotion upon the sabbath, I was so confused by Marseilles and the opera, and the throng that surrounded you, that I never once thought of your regularity in that respect. Indeed, my dear child, I think we should ask your pardon for this injustice. I pity you for being compelled to hear bad sermons; this is a real grievance. I hear very good ones by father Soanen, at St. Gervais's, and the abbé Anselme, at St. Paul's, but not every day: this constraint is imposed upon you by the place you are in. I acknowledge that if I had to communicate for no other reason than external parade, I should not easily be prevailed upon to do it; I would rather avoid edifying fools and ignoramuses, than stake so much upon so important an occasion; for I am sure that the first Sunday in every month, and on the twelve or thirteen feasts of the Virgin, are sufficient. Good heavens! tell them that St. Louis, who was more pious than you are, went to the communion only five times a year. But do the Provençals understand their religion? They are all pilgrims, penitents, makers of vows, women disguised in different colours. What does your foolish woman think of the king of England? will not Ireland allow her a little play? M. du Bois knows more than any man of our holy religion, disfigured as it is; he is as much displeased as I am with the fury of the hangman, who turned the execution of the sentence into a private quarrel between him and the malefactor; care should have been taken, not to let him die while he was

uttering blasphemies; this was sending him to punishment too visibly and too scandalously: he should have been remanded back to prison, as M. du Bois says; opium should have been administered to appease him, and time allowed him to retract; this would have been acting conscientiously; but it is too late.

You talk of Paulina, as if she had a vocation; you think it such a one as your own, according to the estimation of the late M. d'Agen. It may be so, but do not forget to tell me what she says to you respecting it; and in what place she fancies she should like to be: the coadjutor will be a very proper person to examine her. It is true, I feel an affection for her: is it because she has some sort of resemblance to you, even in her imperfections? It must be my star that leads me to it; for, besides that it very rarely happens that we have the same attachment for two persons, I am very much afraid that if Paulina is wayward, she has not, like you, the friendly and affectionate disposition which blinds us to every thing but what is good and exquisite. Some day, my dear child, I shall, if it please God, judge for myself; in the mean while tell me how she goes on; I thought she was gentleness itself, with a disposition to please, that makes us please invariably.

The news respecting M. de Beauvilliers, M. de Chevreuse, and M. de Lauzun, is the coinage of the year; it was circulated here for two days, and probability induced people to credit the report. I sent it to madame de Coulanges and the duchess de Lude: the abbé Bigorré sent it to me: but M. de Lamoignon would not receive it; and it was without foundation. It does not surprise us that it was propagated, and believed, in Provence. You have received Esther; its publication has produced the usual effect; you know M. de Feuillade says it is a civil petition against the approbation of

the public: you will judge. For my part, I answer only for the beauty of the representation, which cannot be called in question.

The duchess de Duras* went, the day after her marriage, which was yesterday, to take her tabouret. Her husband is going to join his regiment; the father, crowned with laurels, is at the head of the finest army France ever boasted; the mother is at Besançon, with a dagger in her heart; and the young duchess, with her mother, at the old hôtel de Bouillon. Madame de Noailles wanted to go into Roussillon with her husband and the countess de Guiche†; they are both pregnant, and are restricted till after their confinement. The duchess de Grammont is going to Bearn. I have informed you what a fine employment M. d'Avaux has obtained; nothing can be more brilliant. I am wholly yours, my dear child; I acquit myself perfectly, with regard to you, of the precept of loving my neighbour as myself.

LETTER DCCCLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 11, 1689.

The duke de Chaulnes has paid the honours of his government to the king of England admirably: he had ordered two suppers to be prepared on the road, one at ten o'clock, the other at midnight: the king pushed on as fast as possible to the last, at la Roche-Bernard: he very kindly embraced M. de Chaulnes, having known him formerly. M. de Chaulnes wished to conduct him to a chamber to repose himself: the king said he only

* Louisa-Magdalen de la Marck.

† Daughter of Mary Frances de Bournonville, duchess de Noailles.

wanted something to eat; and was led to a room where the fairies had served up a hot supper, consisting of the finest fresh and salt water fish, and every other comfort. The company was composed of a great number of the nobility of both sexes. M. de Chaulnes presented him the napkin, and would have waited upon him at table, but the king would not permit it, and made him sup with him, as well as several persons of quality. He ate as if there were no prince of Orange in the world. He set out the next day, and embarked at Brest on the sixth or seventh of this month. What a man this prince of Orange is, who alone sets all Europe in commotion! what a meteor! M. de la Feuillade expatiated the other day upon the exalted genius of this prince; M. de Chandenier said he would rather be the king of England; M. de la Feuillade bluntly replied, "Spoken like a man who had rather be M. de Chandenier*, than M. de Noailles!" This occasioned a laugh.

I return you M. de Grignan's letter; I am terrified even at having it in my pocket; is it possible he can have gone through the dangers he mentions? What a pity he had not *the superb order*, as it went to Monaco! Give my compliments to him upon his hair-breadth escapes. How do I stand with the coadjutor? We agreed very well at Paris: say what you please to him, my dear child, according to the terms upon which you are with him; for I will have no understanding with your enemies.

* Francis de Rochechouart, marquis de Chandenier, had been first captain of the king's body-guard; but falling into disgrace, he was dismissed, and the duke de Noailles succeeded him in 1651.

LETTER DCCCLXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, March 14, 1689.

It is now, my dear child, four o'clock: I dined at eleven, and shall sup in the evening. I have been soliciting the gentlemen of the grand council, where M. Gui* has been pleased to make us recapitulate all the invincible arguments in your suit. I was accompanied by Rochon†, who shows, from two little memorials drawn up in his way, that there is no contradiction in the arrêts. He has thoroughly instructed my good M. Bailly‡, who is to return to-morrow for our sake, to the very tribunal where he formerly made the justice of my cause to triumph; he will not do less for you: it calls for vengeance. We divide: the chevalier is on his side with Vaille; he repeats the fatigues of the war, which I am sure he has very well got over, and only laughs at this. It is indeed a subject only for laughter; for, if justice be heard, the petition will be treated as a foolish, daring, groundless, attempt; and if the petition be received, we will advance our state-letters, and you must come this winter to obtain the victory. But M. Gui chases two hares at a time; on the day he presented a petition to the grand council, he presented

* Agent to madame d'Aiguebonne, with whom M. de Grignan was at law.

† M. de Grignan's agent.

‡ M. Bailly, advocate-general in the grand council, a bold magistrate, had been, like M. de Roquesante, the friend of madame de Sévigné, one of the judges of Fouquet who contributed to save him. They were both exiled in 1664, in consequence of this affair: a circumstance, said Guy Patin, which was never before witnessed.

another to the fourth court of inquests; this has excited anger and indignation. All your great friends do their duty admirably, and the chevalier exceeds all praise.

My dear count, I am rejoiced at your return; you have been in the country of goats, for none but those pretty personages can climb such rocks; the very thought makes me ill. I pray heaven, that the *demons* who appear and disappear in a moment, may not often give you so much trouble. You would not find it difficult to defend yourself here against the fury of M. Gui, who has no other support than ignorance, worthy of madame de B*** †, with whom I had a conversation alone the other day, and who talks as much nonsense as ever. I ask the coadjutor's pardon for speaking thus of his old friend; but she is so unworthy of that title, that I shall no longer check myself. This deceitful woman is not worth caring for, whichever way she turns she cannot injure you. I embrace you, my dear count.

I return to you, my dear child; I am delighted to think you said *amen* to all the trifles I related. You have followed my advice; I am always more gratified at your writing a few lines less to me, than with reading your long letters, a pleasure which is always spoiled by reflecting upon the injury they do you. I find madame de Chaulnes will set out after Easter, and I shall go very commodiously with her. Be not uneasy upon my account, except for the additional space between us, and the interruption of our correspondence for a few days.

I informed you that the queen of England was going to Poissi; it was her intention, but the king opposed it. I wanted to fly after my letter; for I am always sorry to write you untruths. The news of M. de Beauvilliers,

† Madame de Bury.

M. de Chevreuse, and M. de Lauzun, was impertinently propagated throughout Paris. M. de la Trousse set out this morning to take the command in Poitou and the country of Aunis, under the orders, however, of marshal de Lorges. I believe that the chevalier will be in an *army of France*. This is the name given to those that are not upon the Rhine.

LETTER *DCCCLXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, March 16, 1689.

It is a long time since I wrote to my dear cousin. I have not been prevented by forgetfulness, but by a certain chain of little occupations, which makes us continually defer, what, however, we intend some day to perform. M. and madame de Grignan are at their post. M. de Grignan has taken a frightfully fatiguing journey to the mountains of Dauphiny, to disperse and punish some wretched Hugonots, who come out of their holes, and vanish again like ghosts, as soon as they find pursuit is made after them, and that they are to be extirpated. These sort of flying or invisible enemies give a great deal of trouble, of which there is, literally, no end; for they disappear in a moment, and, as soon as their pursuer's back is turned, they reissue from their dens. You can have nothing like this in Burgundy. I believe I am going into Britany with madame de Chaulnes, who is to join her husband there: he has been doing wonders for these six or seven months. As our Britany is full of nobles, who do not like to leave their province, he has raised, in a moment, as it were, the finest regiment of dragoons in the world. Du Cambout has the command of it. He has also raised an

equally fine regiment of militia. The corps of the nobility for the arriere-ban, is surprisingly grand and magnificent. This, my dear cousin, is the account I have to give you of my family, and my intentions. I shall spend five or six months in Britany, where I have a great deal of business, and shall return again with the duchess after the breaking up of the assembly of the states. I think I cannot do better than embrace an opportunity so convenient and so pleasant to me. Adieu, my dear cousin; preserve your Christian philosophy, it is a real treasure; and suffer me to embrace my dear niece, and you, with all my heart.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

WHATEVER you write makes me wish you would undertake some historical work, which might inform posterity of all that passed in your days. Give an account, at least, of all that has taken place in France and in England since the arrival of the prince of Orange in that island. Bring into it all the political arguments that have appeared in the manifestoes of the two parties, and examine the question, whether religion be the motive from which all these movements have arisen.

An Irishman wrote lately to an Englishman, his friend, who was at the court of France, requesting he would tell him how the king had been received there. The Englishman answered him by a verse out of the 109th Psalm: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou upon my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

I defy messieurs de Meaux, d'Autun, Fléchier, and Bourdaloue, great panegyrists as they are, to pronounce a finer eulogium upon the king than this. Adieu, sir; continue to me the honour of your esteem, as to a man who best understands its value.

LETTER DCCCLXVII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 16, 1689.

We have this morning gained the noblest victory that could be wished for, in the present state of your affairs with M. de Aiguebonne: it is in your name, my dear child, thatwe have fought and beaten your enemies. M. Gui had started two hares at once; one by a petition to the grand council, upon the contradiction of arrêts; the other by a civil petition against your last arrêt; to the fourth court of inquests. We were informed of the one to the grand council; otherwise, the judges would have written, *let the parties appear*, and war would have been declared. Writing and pleading then take place, and an affair is traced back to the Deluge; it is re-examined, incidents occur, and this single word, which seems only to imply information and instruction, does all the mischief in the world, to persons no longer willing to plead, and who think their business at an end: you are indebted for this first advice to one of your friends. The counsel who was summing up the evidence, and is a man of sense, was interrupted; he was told that the affair was not as he represented it, and that there was no contradiction in it; he was told that he must be better informed: upon this the chevalier, Rochon, and I, appeared; we proved, even by your adversaries' papers, that, like the Jews, they stood self-condemned. Rochon spoke divinely. Solicitations now took place at the presidents and counsellors; in three days twenty-two judges were consulted; noise, complaints, and out-cries against so long a persecution, only brought to mind the last sentence which you obtained *unanimously*

six months ago. Every one still recollected this. Every one was alive to the subject; such vile chicanery excited indignation. Our friends took the field with so much sincerity, ardour, and earnest desire to extricate you from this oppression, that they seemed to consider it as their own business: they were for throwing out the petition, putting it into the hands of the register, which is to be considered as a decisive judgement, and the civil petition falls of itself. After such decision, no counsel is called, all chicanery is at an end, and every one agrees that it was one of the finest victories that could be obtained under your standard, and in your favour. Such was the pleasure we received this morning; we were all present when the judges entered the court, having the greatest reason to expect that we should confound our enemies; in fact, M. Bailly came out like the dove an hour afterwards, and said to me with a grave face, "Madam, you have obtained what you wished." I used no disguise with the chevalier, Vaille, or Rochon; our hearts were cheered, and my joy would break forth. The chevalier scolded me: he said he would not take me out again with him, if I could not be silent; this was his threat. I would speak loud, I would triumph; he threatened me again, and told me, that those who could not dissemble were not fit to reign. Another counsellor came out, who told M. d'Aiguebonne that he had lost his cause; I saw him quietly withdraw, without saying a word; he is accustomed to this sort of success. I recollect having formerly seen madame d'Ourouer*, mother of M. de Richelieu, fly before me in the same tribunal, where I once more summoned M. Bailly to bring me good fortune. M. Gui

* Maria Frances de Guemaudeuc, widow of Francis de Vignerot, marquis of Pont-Courlai, afterwards married to Charles de Grossove, count d'Ourouer, who was assassinated in his carriage in 1659.

remained to console himself with his snuff-box. Another counsellor told us, we had gained our cause unanimously; *unanimously* was a circumstance that gave us great pleasure. M. Gui had prudently said to M. Rousseau, that the decree you had obtained six months ago, had not been digested, that it had been given by children. Rousseau answered him very humorously this morning; "Twenty-two children, sir, have just condemned you again unanimously." I could not help laughing at this; but the chevalier's great soul would not attend to such trifles. We thanked all our judges when they came out, varying our compliments in twenty different ways. In short, we returned very gaily to dinner; the truth must be owned, the whole republic were convened to receive us: we each write to you our different parts; the chevalier has allotted to me the recital of the victory, and at five o'clock we shall go together to thank our presidents, the dean, and some others, who signalised themselves. If you wish me, my dear child, to talk to you seriously of the chevalier de Grignan, I must tell you, in good truth, that you owe him infinite obligations; nothing could equal his assiduity, his vigilance, his foresight; the strength and power of his solicitations; the warmth with which he inspired his friends to engage in our interest; the high estimation in which he is held; the trouble he has taken, for which God rewards him with a good state of health. In short, we find ourselves so well, and so happy in rendering you a service, that we intend to write a book entitled, *The light and salutary Anxieties of Friendship:* we shall print it, without being afraid of ruining the bookseller by the smallness of the sale; so true it is, that few persons are persuaded of this truth. You cannot be too thankful to the chevalier, or love him too

much. I know not how to talk to you of any thing else at present, this being the gospel of the day.

The grief, which occasioned the chevalier and me last night to weep affectionately at the situation of the archbishop (of Arles), was in some degree alleviated this morning by the letters we received from Arles, which brought no confirmation of it; indeed they are silent upon the subject; we therefore hope that his faintness may not as yet be followed by the consequences we apprehended, and that so painful a loss as that of this great and illustrious prelate, may be retarded, at least, for some months. You say very right, my dear child, this was the *only* proper time to ask what they would have asked at an improper time: but there are some people who never acknowledge themselves in the wrong; God help them!

Madame de Vins has given us good advice, and paid her compliments to us this morning, almost on the field of battle. Madame de Lavardin, madame de la Fayette, and madame de Coulanges, have sent to desire me to give you theirs. Adieu, dear child; I am too happy in having been able to take some steps for you; this is a joy which finds its way straight to my heart. You, count, are not without your share of it; I cordially embrace you both.

What says M. Gaillard * to this victory? ah! I see his eyes and his countenance. His brother does wonders at St. Germain de l'Auxerrois †.

* Madame de Sévigné entertained a very high opinion of M. Gaillard's merit and sense. He was an advocate of the parliament of Aix. She said, when she spoke of him, that no countenance had ever left so pleasing an impression on her imagination as his.

† Father Gaillard, a Jesuit, preached there during Lent with great success.

LETTER DCCCLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 18, 1689.

You are right, my dear child, in thinking, I should be grieved at the death of the archbishop*. You cannot imagine how much the true merit, rare virtues, good sense, and upright heart of this great prelate make me regret his loss. I cannot think of his goodness to his family, his affection for all in general, and for you and your son in particular, without feeling that there is a great vacancy in your house, which will never, I am not afraid to say it, never be filled. There are no minds, no hearts cast in the same mould; they are of a sort of metal that has been transmuted by the corruption of the times, till no more is left of the original ore. You have entered into my sentiments, and done me an honour, which I return, in finding what are your own sentiments. We must have a little of the good ore which we regret, to feel this loss as we feel it: this praise must be allowed; for I am persuaded, that we are more or less affected with great qualities, in proportion as we have more or less relation to them.

Receive here, my dear count, my sincere condolence; you were tenderly beloved by this dear uncle: he loved his name, and his family; he was right; they deserved his love. I pity you for being no longer able to honour so much merit, and so many respectable qualities: the first race is gone by, and we, my dear count, must follow. In the mean time, I embrace you in tears, as if I had the honour of bearing your name.

* Francis-Adhemar de Monteil, archbishop of Arles, and uncle of M. de Grignan, died March 9, 1689.

This melancholy event damps the joy of our little victory. The chevalier is very desirous to push the civil petition, whilst the matter is in hand; but I know not whether he will have time; it should not be left half done: he cannot, however, do amiss. There is nothing more said of an arrêt of council, of the annulling of the arrêt, or any opposition; so that we may sleep quietly till winter. I am delighted to think that our letters, which you receive at night, do not disturb your rest three times a week: I believe you, my dear child, and I will drive away this little dragon that tormented me. Madame de Chaulnes is charmed at taking me with her; I have a thousand things to do at Buron, or rather at Nantes: I must also go there. I cannot employ my time better; afterwards, we shall see what it will please God to do with me, and when he will restore me to you. I believe we shall set out exactly at Easter. Father Gaillard preached excellently this morning on the subject of the Samaritan woman: he is the Bourdaloue of this year.

LETTER DCCCLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, March 21, 1689.

I ASSURE you, my dear child, that the bishop de Beauvais*, who was here the other day, appeared to the chevalier and me a worthy relation and true friend of the Grignans. He regretted and praised the late archbishop so much, that the chevalier could not help telling him at last, that, as the coadjutor had not the archbishop's ribbon, he was delighted to find that it was given to

* Toussaint de Forbin Janson, bishop de Beauvais, afterwards cardinal and grand almoner of France.

him; for father de la Chaise had just informed the bishop from the king, that his majesty had conferred it on him, and that he should wear it at Whitsuntide. This ribbon, you see, was well destined.

I am very well pleased, my dear child, not to go alone upon the Loire, *with the course of the stream in a little boat;* particularly as that of a favourite servant of the king of England, who was taking to Nantes all the toilets, services of plate, night-gowns, and a thousand other conveniencies, which our king had given to the king of England, was upset near the bridge of Cé, and the poor man drowned: this would have terrified you. I shall go in safety, perhaps before Easter, madame de Chaulnes having taken it into her head to pass the holidays at Malicorne. I shall endeavour to stay till Easter week; but I am not certain that it will be so. She intends to write to you to-day, to tell you what care she will take of me. Congratulate M. de Chaulnes on his being treated as no other governor is treated. Revel, lieutenant-general, is under his command; and even the troops that are in the neighbourhood of Brest receive their orders from this governor to obey marshal d'Estrées, when he has occasion for them. M. de Louvois has been delighted with his good conduct, vigilance, and exactness; he says every thing he can in his favour: M. de Chaulnes will be pleased at your knowing this, and writing to him upon the subject.

M. de Barillon is rich, fat, and, as he says, *old*, and views without envy M. d'Avaux's brilliant station. He loves peace and tranquillity, in the midst of his family and friends, with whom he is fully satisfied. You speak admirably of Esther; the misfortunes of Sion should be sung by innocent persons; Champmêlé would have given you the heart-ache. This propriety was one of the charms of the piece. Racine will find it a difficult task

to write such another, for no history affords so excellent a subject as this; it has a combination and an assortment of circumstances which are not, perhaps, to be met with again; for Judith, Boaz, Ruth, and others whom I do not recollect, can never produce so fine an effect. Racine has, however, great talents, and we must hope he will succeed as well.

The marquis de Castries has greatly distinguished himself on an occasion * similar to that in which the chevalier de Sourdis was beaten. Madame de Castries † has received compliments on the occasion, the king having said to cardinal de Bonzi, "If it had not been for the courage of your nephew, the infantry would have been lost; he performed wonders." You may guess how gratifying these praises are. Adieu, my beauty. I told M. de Pomponne that you were jealous of the immortal life of M. d'Angers ‡; he gave me an account of the liveliness of this prelate, who, excepting his sight, enjoys a very good state of health at ninety-two years of age and upwards. An abbé de la Mothe, an archdeacon, the one who condemned the orations of M. le Tourneux, and said the church always viewed translations with horror, died after two days' illness, when he boasted he was in perfect health.

Your son applies himself to his duty and his profession; he is just what you could wish him to be, and is besides well grounded in religion, for which you should thank God. It is a great happiness to be blessed with Christian sentiments.

* At the retreat de Nuys.

† Elizabeth de Bonzi, mother of Joseph Francis de la Croix, marquis de Castries, and sister of cardinal de Bonzi, archbishop of Narbonne.

‡ Henry Arnaud, uncle of M. de Pomponne.

LETTER DCCCLXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 23, 1689.

I SHALL not retract the praises I have bestowed on the tragedy of Esther; I shall be delighted with the harmony and novelty of this spectacle as long as I live; I was in raptures with it; I found in it a thousand things so just, so well introduced, and so important to a king, that I entered with uncommon spirit into the pleasure arising from the utterance, in fiction and song, of the most solid truths: I was affected with these various beauties; and am very far from changing my opinion: but I told you that the impression of this piece has produced its usual effect, and has brought forth a *civil demur* against excessive applause. I, who have read it again with pleasure, suppose that the critics are routed, as M. d'Aiguebonne will be with his *demur*, if the chevalier has time to press the point. The victory of the grand council has been brilliant and gratifying, and I doubt not that it will give you ample satisfaction; I am impatient to receive your letter upon this subject. M. de Lamoignon told me again to-day, that this advantage, gained sword in hand, was greater than we supposed. I told him he was mistaken, as we had felt the pleasure in its fullest extent. He is very much engaged in the great cause between Mademoiselle, the prince, and the whole house of Lorraine, who have recourse to law in the same way we have; M. de Lamoignon is to plead on Thursday, and the affair will be determined upon hearing.

Your son's letter will give you pleasure, as it appears to come from a man who is happy, and who has his profession at heart. The king is so well pleased with M.

de Castries, that he has made him brigadier; this is the right method of proceeding; rewards given at the moment they are deserved receive an additional value, they excite and encourage emulation. His majesty told cardinal de Bonzi *, that, as he had no share in this favour, he ought not to thank him for it.

The king of England set sail on the 17th, and arrived in Ireland on the 19th. Little Mailly, who accompanied him to Brest, is returned. Adieu, my beloved child; I dread an increase of distance from you; it makes me ill. I swallow this journey like a dose of medicine; but the worst is, that I have no time to lose; in truth, my reflections are often of the most melancholy cast; for, though I submit to that Providence which separates us, what would become of me, if I had not the hope of seeing you again?

LETTER DCCCLXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 25, (the day of the Annunciation) 1689.

THOUGH we have not received your letters, we do not fail to write to you. It is very probable that you have set a good example to-day; which is a high festival, and the foundation of that of Easter; in short, it is the festival of Christianity, the day of the incarnation of our Lord: the Virgin Mary acts a great part in it, but not the principal one. M. Nicole, M. le Tourneux, and all our preachers, have told us all they know upon the subject.

Your son has written me a most affectionate letter: he deeply laments the loss of his good uncle the archbishop.

* Uncle of the marquis de Castries.

It is thought that his successor † will soon be here: he may amuse himself, if he pleases, with the civil petition; we have carried the judgement of the grand council sword in hand. I still dispute with madame de Chaulnes; and am for postponing our departure till after Easter. My dear child, how mortified I am at leaving you again! I feel keenly this separation; *reason says Britany, and friendship says Paris.* We must sometimes submit to the stern ruler: you know how to do it better than any one, I must therefore imitate you.

Attend a little to what follows: Are you acquainted with M. de B****, the mad shepherd of Fontainbleau, commonly called *cassepot* ‡? Do you remember his person? tall, thin, silly-looking, sallow, and ghastly. He lodged at the hotel de Lionne with the duke and duchess d'Estrées, madame de Vaubrun, and mademoiselle de Vaubrun. The last of these personages went about two months ago to St. Mary's, in the faubourg of St. Germain. It was supposed that the happiness of her sister had induced her to become a nun. Can you guess what kept this cassepot at the hotel de Lionne? Love, my child; love for mademoiselle de Vaubrun. Though he is precisely what I have described him to you, she was attached to him. Benserade would say of her, as he did of madame de ****, who loved her husband, "So much the better: if she loves him, she will love any one." This girl of seventeen was really smitten with this Don Quixote; and he went yesterday with five or six of M. de Gêvres' guards, broke open the grate of the convent, entered with one of his men,

† John-Baptist Adhemar de Monteil, coadjutor of Arles, brother of M. de Grignan.

‡ Judging by what is said of M. de Charôst in the following letter, and in that of the 11th of April, we may conclude that this cassepot was a Bethune.

found mademoiselle de Vaubrun, who was waiting for him, put her into a coach, took her to the house of M. de Gêvres, made a sort of marriage vow, by kissing his sword, slept with her, and this morning, at break of day, they were off, nobody knows where.

We may truly say, on this occasion, "Agnes and the dead body are gone away together." The duke d'Estrées exclaims that B**** has violated the laws of hospitality. Madame de Vaubrun is for having his head cut off. M. de Gêvres says he did not know it was mademoiselle de Vaubrun. All the B****s seem desirous to prevent their kinsman from being prosecuted. I know not yet what has been said upon the subject at Versailles. This, my dear child, is the gospel of the day. What think you of love? I despise it when it amuses itself with such disgusting personages.

LETTER DCCCLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, March 28, 1689.

We do not set out till after Easter, which delights me: madame de Chaulnes has taken leave; the king said a thousand kind things of her husband. We expect your letters of to-morrow with real impatience; we long to know how you received the news of our *little* victory, which M. de Lamoignon calls a *great* one. For a fortnight past we have been on the water, and have seen you agitated by the same thoughts and fears that we have had. We shall be delighted to see you also safely landed, and equally secure from the storm. You are right to say I was not so much pleased when I gained my cause on which 40,000 crowns depended; I did not feel it in comparison of this: I was young, I know not

what I thought of at that time: I was a stranger to all my affairs: you are much nearer, and your interest is infinitely dearer to me.

M. de Lamoignon has been entangled on all sides in the affair of *cassepot* and Vaubrun. He is related to the latter, and to M. de Gèvres, who, after having assisted in this wicked business, ran to Versailles, and told the king that being the friend of M. de B****, he could not avoid serving him: the king reprimanded him, and told him he did not give him the government of Paris for such a purpose: M. de Gêvres asked pardon, and the king was somewhat pacified. As to M. de B****, he may go where he pleases; but if he should be taken, and tried, no person could save him; all the B**** family will endeavour to prevent his appearing. M. de Lamoignon has brought the girl back to her mother, whose heart was ready to burst at seeing her again: the girl says she is not married; she however passed two nights with this vile *cassepot*. It is reported that she has been married these four months, and that she has so written to the king. Nothing can be more extravagant than the whole affair. The duke d'Estrées is enraged that a man whom he generously allowed to live with him, should thus have broken in upon and violated the laws of hospitality. The duke de Charôst and he had some words on Lady-day; the duke d'Estrées carried his reproaches and menaces to a great length, without mincing the matter; the duke de Charôst was piqued, and said to him, "Sir, if I had not taken the sacrament today I should say so, and so, and so, to you." The duke was in a rage at this. If such was the style of de Charôst on the day of communion, what would it have been on any other day?

We supped last night at the abbé Pelletier's with M. and madame de Lamoignon, M. and madame de Cou-

langes, M. Courtin, the abbé Bigorré, madame Langlois, and your mamma. Not one of us had dined, so that we were quite voracious, and it was the finest repast for Lent that could be seen; the finest fish, the best ragouts, and the most excellent cookery. We wished for you very sincerely; but the wine of St. Laurence so perfectly renewed your remembrance, that there was a battle of little glasses, which plainly proved that the liquor came from you. You have no good fish, my dear child, in your sea; I well remember that we could never get any soles, or *vives*. I cannot conceive how you manage your Lent; for my part, I scarcely feel the inconvenience. M. de Lamoignon, with his nephritic complaint, has not once thought of eating meat.

This, to me, is an incomprehensible period; when time is disagreeable to me, as at present, and I wish and hope for a better, I push it forwards by the shoulder, as you do; and then, when I consider what it costs me in its flight, to what point it tends, and that it also pushes me forward, I stop short, and leave every thing to God: I find no other stay or support against the melancholy future, which I have in view, but his will and providence: without this consolation we should be miserable indeed. "If you knew the gift of God*;" I remember that excellent sermon. I heard a fine discourse on the same day, by father Soanen; the Samaritan woman was not dishonoured: how grievous to see her disfigured by unworthy preachers! it afflicts me. All the preachers of this year are attended to, when the great Pan † does not preach; this is the great Bourda-

* *Si scires donum Dei.* Joan. 4. 5.

† Plutarch relates that a man of the name of Thamus, sailing among the islands of the Egean Sea, heard a voice issue from one of them, commanding him to proclaim every where that the great Pan was dead. As this adventure took its date from the reign of Tiberius, the fathers

loue, who, last year, left father de la Tour *, and even father de la Roche †, and the abbé Anselme, who shines at St. Paul's, and father Gaillard, who works miracles at St. Germain de l'Auxerrois, to preach to empty pews. Adieu, my best and dearest child; do not trouble yourself to answer all this chat: consider that I have but one letter to write; if I were obliged to write another after this, I should actually run away to escape it.

LETTER DCCCLXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 30, 1689.

Ah! thank God, my dear child, you are, at length, arrived; you are upon the same shore with us. You are no longer agitated by uncertainty; you now know as much as we do; but I tell you seriously, that you over-

of the church considered it as a miraculous prediction of the death of Jesus Christ, typified by the great Pan. This word too, in Greek, means *all*, and hence the god Pan has been regarded as the emblem of nature, or even of the universal God, an explanation for which singular motives have been found in the attributes under which he was represented.

Many great personages have been designated either satirically, or in praise, by the name of the great Pan. When cardinal de Richelieu died, there appeared a poem of a hundred lines from Nostradamus, beginning with this verse:

Quand le grand Pan quittera l'ecarlate,——
When the great Pan shall quit the scarlet,——

It was by Guy Patin. Some pedant, I know not who, announced the death of Saumaise under this emphatic name.

We now see why madame de Sévigné calls Bourdaloue, the eminent preacher, who in his sermons included all morality, philosophical and Christian, the great Pan.

* Afterwards general of the oratoire.

† A celebrated preacher of the oratoire.

rate the trifling pains I have taken for you, and the little services I have rendered you. You talk of obligation and gratitude, as if you had forgotten the claims of affection, and were ignorant of the pleasure of aiding those we love; ours have been overpaid by their success; rather let us thank you for giving us this opportunity of displaying our zeal. To all this you add thanks, kind expressions and compliments, which overwhelm us with confusion: I know not whether the chevalier is as much ashamed as I am. I was not aware that my account was so animated, it certainly fell far short of M. Gaillard's eyes; I figure to myself his *admiring* and expressive countenance, which proves that his admiration is not the daughter of ignorance, like that of the rest. In short, my dear child, you were pleased with the picture I drew of our victory. The chevalier has just told me, that on madame de Buri's* return from Paris, the princess de Conti asked her what she had done there. "I have been at law there, madam." "With whom?" "Messieurs de Grignan." "What! do you still continue this knavish business? Fie! fie! how can people begin again when they have once lost a cause, as you had done?"—I ask pardon, my child, of the chevalier's noble soul: I must own that this conversation gave great pleasure to my soul of clay. This is how Buri stands at Versailles; you know how she is in the grand council and the court of inquests; so that you may conclude she deserves the same inscription *(annulled)* upon her back, as upon her petition. She was coming from a judge as I entered; on seeing me, she said to him, "Sir, I leave you in good hands:" the air with which she uttered these words gave me some emotion, but I had the prudence to say nothing; I had also several

* Sister of M. de Aiguebonne.

little things to tell her, but was silent. If you follow the advice of your friend, you will arrange your affairs, so as to come this winter and complete what remains; for with the sentence you have obtained, there is nothing to be feared; what is done, is done, and you will settle the judgement of the civil petition with M. de Grignan's knighthood, pay your respects at court, and see your son: these considerations united will induce you to take a good resolution. Your comparison of M. Gui, who has the folly to seek to be condemned in all the courts, with the fool who was always endeavouring to restore to life a dead body, without being able to compass his design, has greatly humbled me: I find the good use you make of this story, which perished one day entirely in my hands, in the presence of the chevalier: this was a great misfortune, for I think the story excellent. You have restored it to life, my dear child, and have applied it admirably.

We hear that the king of England is arrived in Ireland, where he was received with transport. The prince of Orange is so much afflicted with an asthma, that all the troops he raises desert, thinking he is going to die: seven regiments have left him to go into Scotland. For my part, I am persuaded that the king of England, with God's assistance, will overcome all his enemies, and dispel all the clouds that seem ready to burst upon us. The Swiss are all softened: M. Amelot is doing wonders there: this is great news. M. de Beauvilliers, M. de Lamoignon, and Easter, will reconcile all the spirits that are so enraged at the carrying off mademoiselle de Vaubrun, an affair which I have related to you; the public will be a gainer by the absence of that villain *Cassepot*.

LETTER DCCCLXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 1, 1689.

We still think of setting out as soon as the holidays are over: I cannot get the better of my melancholy at the thought of being so distant from you: I know not how this journey will terminate. I do not think I shall see my son, who is in despair at the tremendous expense he will incur to head his militia in Lower Britany. He admires the work that is cut out for him by the prince of Orange, the d'*Aiguebonne* of Europe, as you very properly call him; and by what arrangements or derangements Providence is pleased to seek him out in his woods, to bring him again into the world and into the war by that quarter.

Your letters of the 27th are arrived. You are indisposed, my dear child; you say that sometimes your stomach talks to you: you see that your head also talks to you: it is impossible to tell you more plainly that you break it to shatters; that though it gives you great pain when you exercise it too violently by reading or writing, it leaves you free, when you leave it free, and desist from such violent exercises, for such they are: that poor head, so good, so well turned, so capable of the greatest things, asks you for quarter: this is not explaining itself ambiguously; take pity on it, then, my dear girl; consider it as impracticable to keep up our double correspondence, to answer all the casual letters that daily arrive, and to write besides to madame de Vins three times a week: this is not living, it is dying for us: very obliging truly! When I see you writing upon large paper, I fancy I see you mounted

upon one of your high horses; you ride well, I acknowledge; but you go too far, and I can no longer endure the consequences. Take pity, then, on yourself, and on us: for my part, if I were obliged, after having written to you, to write another letter of the same length, I should, as I have before told you, run away to escape it. If you think I dwell too much upon this subject, it is that I have it much at heart.

I hope the chevalier will, through M. de Cavoie, prevent my paying compound interest, by paying 17,900 livres, which I have now in my pocket, by the assistance of my daughter-in-law*: if this be the case, pray thank him for me; the way is somewhat long for so lively an acknowledgment as mine, but it is the more worthy of the benefit. I shall be delighted to find M. de Grignan has himself answered your sister-in-law; she writes me a great many sweet things and a great many sour things for him; this, she says, is a disposition she ineffectually combats: in short, it is necessary to jest with her a little, for this is the turn of her mind.

Your son is not now at all exposed to danger; enjoy this calm, my dear child. There has been some skirmishing in other places: Chamilli has been somewhat beaten, and Gandelu considerably wounded; but Toiras has had a brilliant little clash, in which he has defeated or taken three or four hundred men. The affairs of England go on well; the credit of the prince of Orange diminishes daily. A wag has written upon the door of the palace at Whitehall, "This house to be let at Midsummer." Scotland and Ireland are entirely against this prince. The king of England has been very well received in Ireland; he has promised the protest-

* Jane-Margaret de Brehan de Mauron, marchioness de Sévigné.

ants every degree of liberty and protection, provided they are faithful to him. The lord-lieutenant is lady Hamilton's husband. We must see what turn these affairs take; it appears to me as if this large black cloud, loaded with hail, began to disperse. We have seen such as these at Livri, that have gone off without a storm. God will direct every thing. Adieu, my dear child; take care of yourself, make Paulina write, whilst you rest yourself in your closet.

LETTER DCCCLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 6, 1689.

I INFORM you on the part of madame de la Fayette, and the numerous company of hypochondriacs, that vapours arising from the exhaustion of the spirits are the most dangerous and the most difficult to cure; after this if you exhaust yourself, if you take delight in having the head-ache to such a degree that you cannot bend your head without pain, if you will still force yourself to write and read, you will soon find yourself incapable of any thing, and become a mere woman of glass. As this disorder arises solely from incessant writing; I conjure you to be less studious, if you love us; rest upon your bed when you wish to chat with us, and make Paulina write; this will teach her to think and to arrange her thoughts; you will preserve yourself, and we shall converse with you thus, without any expense to you. I wish you had been bled: what inconvenience can arise to you from it? This would have opened your veins, and given your blood more room to circulate; but you will not be persuaded. This dear periwinkle would do wonders for you; I am glad

you found it at hand; one might say it was made on purpose for you. When you recovered your beauty, I was asked, "What grass did she walk upon?" I replied, "On periwinkle." I know not yet why you have been in such a hurry to go these holidays to Grignan, without your husband. Nothing could be better than being at St. Mary's, and avoiding the dust and buildings of Grignan as long as possible. If I understand you, M. *d'Arles* is there: I use this name to avoid saying the coadjutor, or the archbishop: there is great ingenuity in the discovery. Let us say a word more about our victory in the grand council: it has given us a good opinion of our leaders; in truth, our success was glorious and gallant; every thing was rapid; it was a crowned work we carried sword in hand. No one but you could have gained the civil petition, though it had been less difficult, because we should all be separated in a moment, and one person alone cannot undertake it; for my part, I should not engage without my colonel *.

It rains incessantly; I endeavour to put madame de Chaulnes out of her way, that she may defer her journey for a week. I shall pay my money to-morrow to the syndic of Britany; he receives it on account of the principal and interest; I shall make my protestations, and say, "I have paid the sum that I owe upon the inventory; that I am out of debt, and that I neither can nor ought to pay the compound interest, as this would be usury." I wish this were tried by the states, but I am afraid it will come on here before the commissaries. I will draw back as much as I can: but enough of this, it has grieved me, and it is over.

No one knows what is become of the courier of M. d'Henrichemont. But M. de Brionne is to sign to-

* The chevalier de Grignan.

morrow his marriage-articles with mademoiselle d'Espinai, a rich heiress of a great family*. The news from England seems favourable to us; neither the Irish, the Scotch, nor even the English, are attached to the prince of Orange. It is certain that your son is too amiable; this is a blessing and a misfortune; but *God preserve him*, in the tone that flows from your heart, and penetrates mine, for it is the characteristic of truth. Adieu, my dear child; I am not troubled with the vapours, yet I will write no longer: it is late, it rains, and I must send away my letters. I only ask you one question, which pray answer me sincerely: Are you not chagrined, though you laugh at your jealousy? On what terms are you with madame D.? It does not seem to me that you have availed yourself of either her wit or conversation.

LETTER DCCCLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Good Friday, April 6, 1689.

I DID not expect your letters to-day, my dear child; I must retire to-night, as I begin my Easter devotions to-morrow; it is you that I want to estrange a little from my mind. I heard a very fine sermon this morning preached by the abbé Anselme at St. Paul's; I had been quite prejudiced against him; I thought him a Gascon; and this was sufficient to destroy all faith in what he said: but he obliged me to lay aside this unjust opinion, and I think him one of the best preachers I ever heard. He has understanding, devotion, grace, and eloquence; in short,

* This marriage did not take place till the twenty-third of December following.

there are very few I prefer to him. I wish you were treated like Christians in the provinces, and that they would send you such a man as this. How is it possible to attend to your preachers? they are an injury to religion.

Madame de Chaulnes wants to go before Low Sunday. I have just made some little arrangements, which will be admirable, in case of an alarm, to re-establish your peace of mind. Do not mention this again to me, when you write; the chevalier approves it, and that is sufficient. Here ends my letter; I shall add four lines in the evening. I am going to Tenebres, and from thence to St. Paul's.

I am returned, my dear child, and I take my leave of you, desiring you will rest, and make Paulina write, if you are inclined to answer my chat; otherwise do not attend to it, write me short letters, and keep yourself well; this is all I request.

LETTER DCCCLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, April 11, 1689.

You have at length, my dear child, quitted Aix; at least you appear to me to have done so. You are now at Grignan; do you find yourself better in this solitude, with all the inconveniences that have arisen there? I cannot help thinking that your fondness for retirement is, in fact, nothing more than the desire of being faithful to the taste you have acquired for sadness and melancholy: you are afraid, lest dissipation should, in some measure, abate the apprehensions you wish constantly to cherish for your dear child, whenever he is in the least danger. I guess, perhaps, but too justly; but you must be very cruel to yourself, not to take ad-

vantage, at least of the time, when the little man is happy, to be so yourself, instead of anticipating evil as you do. I believe we shall set out the day after to-morrow, in the morning: I am ridiculously melancholy at a journey I wish to take, which I ought to take, and which I do take with every possible comfort of travelling. Madame de Carman * is again to go with us; she is an amiable woman: we shall have a great retinue, two coaches and six, a caravan, eight horsemen; in short, we shall travel in style: we shall sleep at Malicorne: could you wish for a better opportunity? You will at first direct your letters to me at Rennes; and I will inform you when to address them to Vitré. I shall soon be surfeited with the noise and bustle at Rennes; I only go there to see M. de Chaulnes. The chevalier is going immediately to Versailles. I thought *he would not have left me till he had seen me hanged* †, but he has business; I am grieved at the thoughts of his absence; it is a real consolation to me to converse with him, respecting you and your affairs, which are our bond of union. We meet to talk upon what we have solely at heart; the chevalier is strong, I am weak; he can easily do without me, but I cannot do without him; meditation will be my employment, and here I shall find you; but I shall want the prop which was so necessary and so agreeable to me; we are obliged to tear ourselves from, and dispense with, all that is desirable. Tell me your intentions with regard to the civil petition: shall you inform M. d'Aries of it? will you not yourself return to gain it? for, with respect to us, every one may go his own way; we are satisfied with having gained our

* Mary-Anne du Pui de Murinais, marchioness de Carman.

† See Scene IX. Act III. of Moliere's *Medecin malgré lui*.

little victory. Let me hear of you, my dear child, and of all that relates to you; consider that I shall learn nothing more from the chevalier; you may depute Paulina to chat with me, as you know there is nothing I dread so much as overwhelming you with writing.

The misunderstanding between the duke d'Estrées and M. de Gêvres is accommodated; his nose is reconciled to the noses of the Bethunes. Mademoiselle de Vaubrun has so often repeated that she was not married, and that she would be a nun, that she has been placed amongst the *filles bleues* of St. Dennis. The world has gained this advantage, that *Cassepot* is no longer in France. I have no news for you. Mademoiselle de Meri has been very ill of a bilious sickness; she has taken a little emetic tartar, and is now recovered. Adieu, my dear child; preserve for me the dear affection which constitutes the happiness of my life: I will not tell you all my tenderness, nor all my weakness.

LETTER DCCCLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, April 12, at night, 1689.

If your letters, which I expect, come to hand to-night, I will answer them upon the road, or, at latest, at Malicorne. We shall set out to-morrow morning, and sleep at Bonnelle; the rest will go at eight or nine o'clock; madame de Chaulnes, who is vigilance itself, will set off at day-break. You know, that in going to Bourbon, I must rather accommodate myself to her manners, than endeavour to correct them; so I shall pursue my journey, and, from the easiness of my disposition, nothing will displease me. All the security

and precautions that can be desired in a journey, I shall find in this; and I shall not even have occasion to be frightened, to cry out, and blush; our good duchess takes upon herself all these things, and I shall go through it with all the external marks of courage and resolution, compared to her seeming fear and timidity: thus I shall obtain undeserved eulogiums. I have given all necessary orders for the receipt of your letters at Malicorne, Vitré, and afterwards at Rennes. I will write to you again as soon as possible; but be under no concern if you should not receive my letters regularly, as this will be the fault of the weather and the post. I am still grieved at my departure; how can I reflect upon the situation of your affairs without real sorrow? the death of the archbishop (of Arles) still overwhelms you. I fear, I know not why, that your eagerness to get to Grignan has been too great a fatigue to you. The chevalier was a little uneasy that you set out from Aix, without discharging your debts entirely: there are some things that should not be omitted; they escape our memory, as soon as we are absent. God grant we may meet again some time or other. God preserve you; take care of your health; mine is of great consequence to me, on account of the interest you take in it. I have been paying some farewel visits this morning for your sake; this is the salt which makes every thing relish. Adieu, my beloved countess: I weep; what folly! It is owing to this renewed absence and lengthened distance. See M. la Garde, keep up your spirits, and do not give way to melancholy: avail yourself of your courage, and fulfil the decrees of Providence.

LETTER * DCCCLXXIX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 13, 1689.

You have answered well for the arriere-ban of Autun, my dear cousin; but as I cannot say the same things as you, you would very much oblige me by writing an answer for me to the lieutenant-general d'Auxois, who requires me to send a man. I tell him I gave the principal of my estate at Bourbilly to my daughter on her marriage: he torments me for the usufruct. I ask your pardon, my dear cousin, but I shall throw myself, without hesitation, into the commons of Paris. I shall show the leases of my houses; shall produce my receipts for mud and other trifles; shall even prove that I have distributed the bread-offering: in short, I shall make my escape through the bogs as I can, rather than pay five or six hundred francs for a substitute for the arriere-ban. I have seen my old friend M. Jeannin here, and madame de Monjeu, whom I like extremely. Madame de Toulonjon has also her value. Amuse yourself with these charming women, my dear cousin, and be careful of a state of health which animates and gives hope to ours. I embrace my dear niece, and recommend you to each other.

LETTER * DCCCLXXX†.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, May 13, 1689.

You will do well, my dear cousin, to exempt yourself from the payment of six or seven hundred livres for a substitute in the arriere-ban, if you are able. You formerly gave enough to your son for the king's service. Endeavour to pass for a citizen of Paris; I consent to this, and to every thing that can save your cash, except losing you as my dear cousin; for I would rather pay the sum for you, than that this should happen.

The lot of war will fall upon Flanders, because the emperor will be engaged with the Turk and with Tekeli. The inhabitants of Liege ‡ have been guilty of an instance of treachery to the king, of which we have no example in our century; depend on it that he will exhibit to future ages an example of their punishment. He has not slackened in his assistance to the king of England. Nothing can be more noble or more honourable than the zeal he displays for him. Adieu, my dear cousin; I send you a little poem of M. Pavillon's, which will please you.

† We insert this letter before its date, as being an answer; it would be less easily understood if it were placed further on.

‡ They had seized a supply destined for the French army, and received the enemy into their citadel. Liege was, in 1691, bombarded by marshal de Boufflers.

LETTER DCCCLXXXI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 13, late at night, 1689.

Our journey is not only postponed for to-day, but we shall not set out for Britany these twelve days, on account of M. de Chaulnes's journey to Nantes. Madame de Chaulnes called on me this morning, to ask me if I would spend ten days with her at Chaulnes; or whether we should meet at Rouen on a day appointed, and go to Britany by way of Caen: I did not hesitate; I am so much on wing, and so absent from Paris, that I am going to rest myself at Chaulnes; madame de Carman is of the same opinion. It is so decided, and to-morrow we set out for Chaulnes; but you, my dear love, are at Grignan; I enter into all your anxiety, and feel it with you. You were afraid there would be no war, and were thinking to what part of Europe you should be obliged to send your son. Providence has laughed at your devices; all Europe is in a blaze; you have not thought of the prince of Orange, who is the Attila of this period. Some important news is circulated to-day, which will give a turn to affairs; the king of Poland having declared war against the emperor on twenty subjects of complaint, and the Turk not having made peace, there will not be much to fear on the borders of the Rhine. In short, my child, every thing is from above; every thing is in the hands of God. This little boy, already habituated to the profession, so capable, so well informed, and who has seen three sieges before the age of seventeen: this is what you little thought of, but which God saw from all eternity. Tell me how

Paulina employs herself. Adieu, my beloved child; reflect that you are a woman of fortitude; that if there was no war, you would be in search of it; that God preserves your son; that he is in his hands, and that you may hope to see him again in good health: think of the many perils from which he has snatched the chevalier, and that your child will follow the steps of his uncle.

LETTER DCCCLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Chaulnes, Sunday, April 17, 1689.

I EXPECT your letter on Friday; how sad it is that I can no longer hear from you regularly three times a week! this is what I have at heart, and which I called my *light affliction*; but indeed it is not light, and I shall painfully feel this privation. The chevalier wrote me a short adieu from Versailles, but so full of kindness, that it greatly affected me; he cruelly withholds from his friends the knowledge of the share they have in his esteem; and, as they are anxious to obtain it, he deprives them of a real pleasure. I thanked him for his letter, by another which I wrote at my departure: he informed me that your son would not be in a certain detachment, as what had been talked of was no longer a subject of attention; this afforded my heart much relief; and as he has told you the same, you must breathe as freely as I do. I but too well understand all your sorrows; they reflect back to me, so that I feel them doubly.

I set out then, my beloved child, on Thursday, with madame de Chaulnes and madame de Carman; we were in the best carriage, drawn by the best horses, with a

great retinue, caravans, horsemen, and every possible convenience and precaution that could be taken. We slept that night at Pont, in a pretty little inn, and the next night here. The roads are bad; but this is a very handsome house, which carries with it an air of grandeur, though it is partly unfurnished, and the gardens neglected. There is scarcely any verdure to be seen, and not a nightingale to be heard; in short, it is still winter, on the seventeenth of April. But it is easy to imagine the beauties of these walks; every thing is regular and magnificent; a spacious parterre in front, bowling-greens opposite the wings, a large playing fountain in the parterre, two in the bowling-greens, and another at a distance in the middle of a field, which is well named *the solitary*; a fine country, beautiful apartments, and a pleasant prospect, though flat; elegant furniture, which I have not yet seen: in short, the house is worthy of all you have heard of it in prose and verse. The duchess is so good, so amiable, and so attentive to me, that if you love me, which I do not at all doubt, you must necessarily be very much obliged to her for all the civilities she shows me. We shall stay in this delightful house six or seven days longer: we shall then go through Normandy to Rennes, where we shall be on the second or third of next month. This, my dear child, is all I can tell you of myself, except that I enjoy the most perfect state of health in the world. How are you, my love? alas! at what a distance I am from you! how present are you to my remembrance! tell me, how can I avoid being melancholy?

I received your letter of Good Friday on the ninth of April: my child, you undertake too much; you abuse your youth; you find that your head will not suffer you to exhaust it by so much writing; if you do not attend

to its monitions in time, the consequences may be fatal; you refuse to be bled; but why did not you undergo this operation at Aix, before you began to keep Lent? in short, I am dissatisfied with you and your health. Your reasons for lengthening your stay at Avignon are good; it would otherwise, as you say, be too early for Grignan: the dreadful winter and tremendous winds are still to be feared there. The chevalier and I are now incapable of serving you in your civil petition; he expects to set out every moment; my departure has already taken place; this is not the work of a day; Hercules could not defeat Anteus*, nor root him out from his wicked practices, in three months: this business, then, must be M. d'Arles's department. All this made me say, that if you could have come this winter with M. de Grignan, you would, according to the laws of the game, have put an end to this affair: your presence would have wrought miracles. You talk to me of the dispositions of the people of Provence; those of this country are not so difficult to understand; they may be discovered in a moment: but you, my dearest child, are too amiable, too grateful; all you say to me is gratitude: I am at home there; yours is the most affectionate, the tenderest, and the noblest in the world: preserve your feelings, your sentiments, and the rectitude of your mind; reflect upon all this sometimes, as we smell at Hungary water, when we are in a bad air; take nothing from the country where you are, but preserve all you carried thither; and above all things, my dear child, pay attention to your health, if you love me, and wish me to return.

* The giant of Libya, son of Neptune and the Earth, smothered by Hercules.

LETTER DCCCLXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Chaulnes, Tuesday, April 19, 1689.

I EXPECT your letters; the post comes in three times a week, and I have a strong desire to stay here. I begin then to write to you, to render you an account of my thoughts; for this is all I have now to tell you, which will not make my letters very entertaining; nor will you meet with any thing new, since you have long known that I love you, and how I love you. You would do well, therefore, instead of reading my letters, to leave them unopened, and to say, "I know all that my mother tells me;" but, being persuaded that you will not have the power to act thus, I must tell you, that I am very uneasy about your health, and your head-ache. I am terrified at the air of Grignan; a wind that can "tear up by the roots trees whose towering heads reached the skies, and whose feet touched the empire of the dead*," makes me tremble; I fear lest it should carry away my daughter, exhaust her strength, dry up her veins, deprive her of rest, make her grow thin, and destroy her beauty; I own to you, that all these apprehensions make me shudder, and deprive me of all comfort. I was walking alone, the other day, in these beautiful alleys, madame de Chaulnes being engaged in business, and madame de Carman too delicate to walk; I therefore rehearsed for the Rocks; I entered into all my former melancholy thoughts, yet found some pleasure in being alone. I read over three or four of your letters; you talk of writing well; no one can excel you

* See the fable of the Oak and the Rivulet, by La Fontaine, Fable 22.

in this respect; how easily do you express yourself in a few words, and how do you arrange them! this perusal affected my heart, and gratified my mind. This is a very pleasant house to be in; we have no restraint here; you are acquainted with the good and substantial qualities of this duchess. I have discovered that madame de Carman is a very amiable woman; she has much more merit and wit than she displays; she is very superior to the generality of women; has a great share of information, which she increases every day by reading the best authors; it is a pity that she should be fixed at the extremity of Lower Britany. When you can write to M. and madame de Chaulnes, I will willingly resign my part to them: you can write to me by Paulina: I know your style, and that is sufficient. I wish M. de Grignan were with you; I do not like your being alone in that castle, my poor little Orithyas *! for Boreas is neither gallant nor civil to you; this it is that afflicts me. Adieu, my love; respect your side, and your head: I know not whether you have any other ailments. I comprehend your anxiety for your son, I feel it, from my love for him, and from my love for you, which is greater still. Thus I receive two blows at once.

Corbinelli, who is the best man in the world, is still with us, and still immersed in his *christianised* philosophy; for he reads nothing but godly books.

* Orithyas, daughter of Erechteus, king of Athens, was carried away by Boreas, king of Thrace; which gave rise to the fable of the rape of Orithyas, by the wind called Boreas.

LETTER DCCCLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Chaulnes, Friday, April 22, 1680.

It is a pity to be obliged to quit so beautiful and so charming a place, where your letters arrive three times a week; you know that without the one thing needful, we suffer every thing, and how can I expect to find it when you are absent? We shall set out on Sunday, with delightful weather, which has already afforded us here, in three days, all the beauties of spring. We shall sleep at Amiens, and go from thence by Rouen, through Normandy, into Britany. I shall write to you from every place I can; I shall stay only a few days at Rennes, to see M. de Chaulnes; and shall then go to the Rocks; I should die if I were to be long at Rennes. But can you conceive how impatient I am to receive your letters, and to know whether you have been bled, and how the air of Grignan agrees with that good head which has never injured you? How I hate the vapours that arise from the exhaustion of the spirits! how difficult they are to cure, when the remedy consists in yielding to dulness, and inaction of body and mind! To a person so lively and active as you are, this is martyrdom; alas! as you say, it is a strange alternative, either to be doomed to count the trees, or to be ill. I often reflect upon this, and read over your letters at my leisure; and, as I have nothing to do, I chat with you, and begin my letter before yours is arrived: do not follow my example; take care of yourself, and make Paulina write. I compared her writing with yours the other day; it is very like, and she spells well; is not this pretty? In short, my dear

countess, avail yourself, I beseech you, of this little secretary, who pleases me highly. Paulina must write, and you must dictate; nothing can be better for her or for you.

We have seen M. de Chaulnes's machinery; it is admirable, and formed upon a model of sublime simplicity. Five large playing fountains in the parterre and bowling-greens; a watering-place, which is a little canal; fountains for the office, kitchen, and wash-house, are supplied where formerly there was not water even to drink. Admire his courage, for all the country laughed at his attempt; he has converted a cabbage-plot into a young plantation that was scarcely seen at first, but is now perfectly beautiful: and all this was done whilst he was at Britany, or at Versailles. Good heavens! my dear child, how dangerous my leisure is to you! I fear it will make you ill; it is tinctured with the melancholy of my reveries. I am grieved at being deprived of the conversation of the chevalier; this union, which was so natural, was a source of comfort to me. I am also uneasy that I have not heard from the marquis: how many sacrifices are to be made to God! I often trace him in every thing that happens: we are all feeble and tottering under his all-powerful hand, which now puts Europe into such commotion, that it would be difficult to say what may be the consequence of this universal cloud.

I have just received your letter of the fourteenth, which gives me real joy; your head-ache has, in some degree, subsided, you will not allow us to say *vapours;* but what shall we do, if you deprive us of this word? for it is used for every thing: till you Cartesians produce another, I must ask your permission to use it. Endeavour then to get rid of this disorder, and this giddiness, which incapacitate you for every thing. The

pain in your side has also given me great uneasiness; we had heard nothing of it for a long time; adhere to the admirable periwinkle, bring it to your own terms, and inform me of the state of your health; mine is still perfect, notwithstanding some sorrows which it is impossible to avoid. I admire the limits you wish to set to my life; this expression of your heart is worthy of your affection: I am sensible of its full value. We here leave the first delightful dawn of spring; this castle is very beautiful, but the elevation of yours makes it resemble the palace of Apollo.

LETTER DCCCLXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Chaulnes, Sunday, April 24, 1689.

We thought of setting out to-day, my dear child, but this will not take place till to-morrow. Madame de Chaulnes was taken so ill the night before last with a sore throat, had so much difficulty to swallow, and her ear was so much swelled, that madame Carman and myself knew not what to do: at Paris she would have been bled instantly, but here she was rubbed with the quieting balsam, and her ear stopped, and covered with brown paper; she was put to bed, covered up warmly, and was a little feverish: in truth, my dear child, we witnessed almost a miracle. This precious balsam performed so complete a cure during the night, that the next day, swelling, sore throat, and kernels, disappeared; so that she was able to *play at chuck-farthing* *, and it was only from ceremony that she kept

* Allusion to the miraculous cures Moliere attributes to the *Medecin malgré lui*.

her room one day: this is really a divine remedy; take special care of what you have of it; we ought never to be without it. But, my dear child, how grieved I am at your head-ache! what do you mean by telling me you resemble M. Pascal? you make me shudder. To write like him is a fine thing; nothing can be so charming: but the cruel alternative, to have a head so delicate and so exhausted as his, which was the torment of his life, and at length cut him off in the midst of his career! We may bewilder our brains without being always immersed in Euclid's propositions; when the spirits are exhausted to a certain degree, this has the same effect. I fear also that the air of Grignan may be injurious to you: ah, what an idea is this! I fear that you are already consumed and emaciated; would to God that your air was as serene as this! I fancy you sincerely regret that of Livri; bad as it was sometimes to those ill disposed towards it, how mild and gracious it was to us! how pleasant were those showers! we shall never forget that delightful little spot. My child, no one but Paulina is a gainer by your head-ache; for she is too happy in writing all your thoughts, and learning to hate her mother as you hate yours. She sees you declare to me, that, in order to enjoy good health, you must cease to love me: what is there of good or agreeable that she has not learned since she has written for you? You are very humorous on the subject of the rain; what is rain? how is it made? is there such a thing as rain? And to compare that of Provence * to the tears of little children, who cry through anger, and not good-nature: what an excellent idea! Did not Paulina heartily laugh at it? Once more I

* It seldom rains in Provence; sometimes not at all, or so little, during the summer, that the earth is more parched than moistened by it.

must say I think her happy. You have not been bled, my dear child; I dare not advise you at such a distance; bleeding may not, perhaps, be proper for those whose spirits are exhausted. You are too good, to be fond of speaking of me; I am of much more consequence in your estimation than I am in reality, whether in body or mind. I am very comfortable here, would to God your health were as good as mine! but how grievous it is to be so far asunder! it is impossible now to embrace each other; this was not the case at Paris. I wish your buildings would erect themselves, as the walls of Thebes formerly did, by Amphion*; you play off the ignorant; Paulina, I am sure, is capable of giving an account of this passage of the fable.

LETTER DCCCLXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Pecquigni, Wednesday, April 27, 1689.

We set out on Monday from Chaulnes to sleep at Amiens, where madame de Chaulnes is honoured and revered as you are in Provence; this is the only parallel case I ever knew. The intendant † gave us a very handsome fish supper, on account of its being St. Mark's day; yesterday we dined *en gras* to perfection. After dinner we arrived here, at a mansion that displays all the pride of the heiress of Pecquigni ‡. It is an old house, built

* Amphion, the son of Jupiter and Antiope, was considered as the inventor of music, insomuch that the poets feigned that the rocks followed him, and that the stones, at the sound of his lyre, disposed themselves without assistance to raise the walls of Thebes.

† M. Chauvelin.

‡ Claire Charlotte d'Ailli, only daughter and heiress of Philibert Emanuel d'Ailli, lord of Pecquigni, vidame of Amiens, had married

on an eminence above the town, like Grignan; a fine chapter, as at Grignan; a dean and twelve canons: I know not whether the foundation be as handsome, but there are terraces on the borders of the river Somme, which winds in a thousand meanders through the fields, which indeed are not to be found at Grignan. There are the remains of one of Cæsar's camps about a quarter of a league from hence, the intrenchments of which are still venerated; this is a companion to the bridge of du Gard *. You ask, "What, my dear mother, are you doing? are you not going into Britany?" To this I answer, "We shall go, my dear; but as M. de Chaulnes will not be at Rennes till the ninth of next month, we have time enough for our journey, and shall not set out from hence these two days." This delay is not disagreeable to me, as I shall take my measures here to go to Nantes in the month of June or July; I do not expect to have any real satisfaction all this while, because I shall not see you; you are my ruling star; I look and hope for another period, which is at God's disposal, as well as every thing else in this world. But I often reflect upon your health, your head, and that piercing air which destroys you; the goodness of your castle walls pleases you; and I admire your own goodness, which exposes you to this violence. Adieu, my dearest child; I embrace you, without being able to tell you how tenderly I love you. I am reading the life of the duke d'Epernon, which includes almost a whole century, and is very amusing.

Honoria d'Albert, marshal of France, and father of Charles d'Ailli, duke de Chaulnes, who is mentioned in this letter.

* This bridge, which is a beautiful structure, is an ancient work of the Romans, upon the Gardon, in Lower Languedoc; it is built of hewn stone, of an amazing length and thickness, and has three stories of arches one above another.

LETTER DCCCLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Pecquigni, Saturday, April 30, 1689.

If I may believe the wind, my dear child, I am certainly at Grignan; your north-east wind in the open country cannot be more violent. I cannot help thinking we are on the point of entering into such an unseasonable month of May as we have often seen at Livri. We have been in this beautiful house these three days, where we have the most delightful prospect; we shall set out in an hour for Rouen, which we shall reach to-morrow, and where I shall find your letters; it is a great grief to me to have been deprived of them for these six days; they are so necessary to the subsistence of my heart and mind, that I faint when they fail me. We should have been at Rouen three days ago, if some business that madame de Chaulnes has had to transact, and a desire of not reaching Rennes till the ninth of May, had not detained us here. For my part, it is of very little consequence to me to be a month upon the road; the interruption of our correspondence is the only thing that vexes me. I spent ten days very pleasantly at Chaulnes, receiving your letters regularly three times a week. I have been at Amiens, have seen the castle of Pecquigni, have written into Britany, and have sent my orders there: I shall not be better off at Rennes; the Rocks alone will afford me an agreeable solitude, where I shall, at least, enjoy tranquillity. I am quite destitute of news at present; I am ignorant of the state of your health, whether you have been bled, whether Boreas still terrifies you with his blast; I own I am very much afraid of him upon your account; I

know not what part you have taken with respect to mademoiselle d'Alerac's marriage*; I know nothing of the chevalier or of the marquis, and I have all these things very much at heart. I hope I shall gain intelligence to-morrow at Rouen, from whence I will write to you again; the only reason of my writing to-day is, that this miserable letter may be forwarded on Monday, and that you may not have to add to the number of your uneasinesses, that of being in suspense respecting the state of my health, which is perfect; I wish yours was as good: my love for you induces me to take care of myself; I eat nothing but what is proper for me, never two meals alike; madame de Chaulnes and madame de Carman follow the same rule. See, my child, whether I am convinced of your affection, since I abate nothing from that delightful tone, which tells me my conversation is agreeable to you: cherish, then, the same regard for me; doubt not that my love is full as great as yours, and with much greater reason. Adieu, my dear child. I do, indeed, love Paulina; I find myself prejudiced in her favour; I fancy that in the little altercations between you, I should be her advocate.

Madame de Chaulnes and madame de Carman say a thousand pretty things to you. The latter is a great reader, she knows something of every thing; I have also a little of this tincture, so that our superficies agree very well together.

* Frances-Julia de Grignan, married on the sixth of May following, to Henry Emanuel Hurault, marquis de Vibraie.

LETTER DCCCLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Pont-Audemer, Monday, May 2, 1689.

I SLEPT last night at Rouen, from whence I wrote you a line, merely to inform you that I had received two of your letters with great affection. I do not give way to all its effusions; for I should too often shrink from the combat, that is to say, from the society: it is enough for me to feel it, not to examine it too near. Rouen is eleven leagues from Pont-Audemer; we are come here to sleep. I have seen the finest country in the world, the most delightful meadows, and all the meanderings of the beautiful Seine, whose banks, for four or five leagues, are not inferior to the Loire; they are graceful, adorned with houses and trees, young willows, and little canals, that are cut from this great river; all this is, indeed, beautiful. I had no recollection of Normandy, I was too young when I saw it; alas! there is not, perhaps, one person to be found of all I formerly saw there; this is a melancholy reflection! I hope to find, at Caen, where we shall be on Wednesday, your letter of the twenty-first, and that of M. de Chaulnes. I constantly took my meals with the chevalier till my departure; Lent did not separate us; I was delighted to converse with him on your affairs, I feel the loss of his society; I seem to be in an unknown country, by never entering into this subject. Corbinelli would not spend the evenings with him, his philosophy went to bed; I saw him in the mornings, and the abbé Bigorré often came to tell us the news.

I shall watch your return, which will regulate mine;

you are my ruling star. When I set out, M. de Lamoignon was at Baville with Coulanges. Madame du Lude, madame de Verneuil, and madame de Coulanges, came from their convents to bid me adieu; they all met at my house with madame de Vins, who was just returned from Savigny. Madame de Lavardin also came with the marchioness d'Huxelles, madame de Mouci, mademoiselle de la Rochefoucault, and madame du Bois: so many farewells made my heart very heavy. I had on the preceding day embraced madame de la Fayette, this was the day after the holidays; I was quite astonished at my departure; but, my dear child, I was in reality going to greet the arrival of spring in every place I passed through. It is a beautiful spring; so brilliant and mild, that I wish for you every moment to enjoy it with me, instead of still suffering that cruel Boreas, who destroys you, and kills me whenever I think of it.

I embrace Paulina, and pity her in not having a taste for history, it is a great amusement; does she, at least, like the Moral Essays, and Abbadie*, as well as her dear mamma? Madame de Chaulnes sends you a thousand friendly remembrances; she takes great care of me, indeed too great. It is impossible to travel through a more beautiful country, with greater comfort, in greater style, and with less restraint. Adieu, my beloved, this is enough for Pont-Audemer; I will write to you from Caen.

* Author of an excellent Treatise upon the Truth of the Christian Religion.

LETTER DCCCLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Caen, Thursday, May 5, 1689.

I THOUGHT I should receive at this place your letter of the twenty-first of April, which I did not receive at Rouen; it would have been a pity to have lost it. Good heavens! in what a tone, with what a heart, for tones spring from the heart, and in what a manner do you talk of your affection for me! It is true, my dear countess, the business of Avignon is a great consolation: if, as you say, it had come at the flow of your finances, how greatly would it have facilitated a journey to Paris! Your expenses have been very great, and this will only make up deficiencies; but, as I said the other day, you must have lived to receive these favours from Providence; nevertheless, my child, this same Providence will enable you, by another channel, to come to Paris; we must wait its determinations.

It is not easy to comprehend how the chevalier, with so many complaints, will be able to make a campaign; but he seems determined, at least, to show that he wishes it sincerely; this, I believe, no one doubted. He is very much inclined to go to Balurac for the sake of the waters; I have seen the unfeigned approbation which the capuchins bestowed on these waters, and as they confirm his good opinion of them, he must act as he pleases; he has good sense, and knows what he is doing. But, good heavens! what a man is our marquis! will you believe us another time? When you were inclined to draw unfavourable consequences from his childish fears, we told you that he would be the thunderbolt of war; he is one, and you have made him so; indeed, he is an

amiable youth; his dawning merit promises a noble growth: God preserve him! I am persuaded you do not doubt the tone in which I utter this.

I do not think you will have the courage to obey your father *Lanterne**. Would you deprive Paulina, who has a good understanding, of the pleasure of exercising it, in reading the beautiful pieces of Corneille; Polyeuctes, Cinna, &c.? To have only this scrap of devotion, without being led to it by the grace of God, seems to me like wearing boots without stockings; it has no connexion or conformity with the rest. I do not find that M. and madame de Pomponne treat Felicité † in the same manner, who learns Italian, and every thing necessary to form the mind; I am persuaded that she will study and explain the fine works in question. Madame de Vins was educated in the same way ‡, and yet they will not fail to teach their daughter to be a Christian, what it is to be a Christian, and all the beauty and solidity of our religion: this is all I shall say to you on the subject. I believe Paulina imitates you in having an aversion to history; I think it very amusing. I am very much pleased with the life of the duke d'Epernon by Girard; it is not new, but it has been recommended to me by my friends, and by Croisilles, who have read it with pleasure.

A word respecting my journey, my dear child. We came here in three days from Rouen, without any adventure, except fine weather and a charming spring, eating nothing but the best of every thing, going to rest early, and suffering no inconvenience of any kind. We arrived here this morning: we shall not set out till to-

* From *lanterneries*, foolish or ridiculous stories.

† Catherine-Felicité Arnauld de Pomponne, married to John-Baptist Colbert, marquis de Torci, and minister of state.

‡ Sister of madame de Pomponne.

morrow, in order to reach Dol in three days, and then go to Rennes; M. de Chaulnes expects us with a lover's impatience. We were upon the sea-coast at Dive, where we slept; it is a fine country. Caen is the prettiest, cleanest, most cheerful, best-situated city in the world: its streets are spacious, its buildings elegant, and its churches magnificent; to this add its fields and walks, and, in short, that it is the birth-place of all our geniuses*. Our friend Segrais is gone to messieurs de Matignon, which is a disappointment to me. Adieu, my beloved child; I embrace you a thousand times. You are now in the dust of your buildings.

LETTER DCCCXC.

TO THE SAME.

Dol, Monday, May 9, 1689.

We arrived here yesterday somewhat fatigued, and the horses still more so. This is the place where I came to see M. and madame de Chaulnes four years ago. We came from Caen in two days to Avranches; we we found the good bishop† of this city dead and buried a week before; he was Tessé's uncle, a pious prelate, who was so much afraid of dying out of his diocese, that, to avoid this misfortune, he never quitted it. There are some, whom nothing but death could bring into theirs. We found all the domestics of this good man in tears; his shade, however, did not deny us a good supper and comfortable beds. From my chamber-window I saw the sea and mount St. Michael, that

* John-Renauld de Segrais, of the French academy, was of Caen, as well as Malherbe, Huet, &c.

† Gabriel-Philip de Froullai, bishop of Avranches.

proud hill, which you saw so haughty, and which saw you so beautiful: I recollect this journey with affection; do you remember our dining at Pontorson? We were a long time upon the shore, constantly looking at this mountain, and I constantly thinking of my dear child. At length we arrived here, where I defy death to catch the bishop. We found a guard belonging to M. de Chaulnes, who is employed in receiving all the troops, who come from every quarter; the grief and astonishment of the inhabitants of Britany are deplorable, as these are things to which they have been strangers since the wars of the counts de Montfort and de Blois: in short, nothing but tears and lamentations are to be seen and heard on every side. We shall rest to-day. My son is with his wife at Rennes; I shall take up my abode with the good Marbeuf, though she is not upon the best terms with this duke and duchess, being entirely devoted to M. de Pontchartrain; but I must submit to this trifling mortification; I shall always follow my own plan, I am upon good terms with every one. It is only for the sake of conversing with you that I write; for I have neither an answer to make you, nor any news to communicate. Adieu. I am in very good health, and have got rid of my fatigue: this good duchess is no bad travelling-companion; she loves and embraces you with her whole heart.

LETTER DCCCXCI.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Wednesday, May 11, 1689.

We arrived at Rennes yesterday from Dol, which is ten leagues; we have travelled a hundred long leagues in eight days and a half. The dust injures our eyes;

but thirty women, who came to meet the duchess of Chaulnes, and whom we were obliged to embrace in the midst of the dust and in the burning sun, as well as thirty or forty gentlemen, fatigued us much more than the journey had done. Madame de Carman, who is very delicate, sunk under it; but I went through the whole without any inconvenience. M. de Chaulnes came to dinner, and showed me great attention. I discovered my son in the vortex; we embraced each other cordially, and his little wife was delighted to see me. I gave my place in madame de Chaulnes's carriage to M. de Rennes, and went with M. de Chaulnes, madame de Carman, and my daughter-in-law, in the bishop's carriage; we had only a league to go. I came to my son's to change my dress and refresh myself, and from thence went to sup at the hotel de Chaulnes; where I met with the good marchioness de Marbeuf, to whose house I returned to sleep, and where I am lodged like a real princess de Tarente, in a handsome chamber, hung with fine crimson velvet, and ornamented like that at Paris; a good bed, in which I slept well; a good hostess, who is charmed to have me for an inmate; a good friend, who has the kindest sentiments for us; all this must please you. Here I am fixed for some days; my daughter-in-law, like myself, casts a longing eye towards the Rocks, impatient to go and repose herself there; she cannot long support the hurry and bustle occasioned by madame de Chaulnes's arrival: we shall take our time; I always thought her very lively and pretty, very fond of me, and delighted with you and M. de Grignan; her regard for him makes us laugh *. My son is as amiable as ever, and

* Madame de Sévigné's daughter-in-law had never seen M. de Grignan.

appears very glad to see me; he is very handsome in his person, enjoys perfect health, and is extremely lively and witty; he talks much of you, and your son, whom he loves; he has heard such praises of him, as affect and surprise him; for, like us, he imagined he was only a little monkey, and all that is related of him is solid and serious. Talk to me a little of your health, my dear child; mine is perfectly good, which surprises me; you are troubled with giddinesses; how did you dare give them this name, since you have exploded *vapours*? The pain in your legs gives me pain: our capuchin is no longer here, he is gone back to work with his dear comrade, whose eyes give you such disagreeable ideas; so that I can no longer obtain advice, either for you or Paulina. I entreat you to encourage this child's desire of pleasing you, and you will make her an accomplished woman; I advise you also to avail yourself of the facility you find in her, to serve you as a little secretary, with her free hand and good orthography; let this little personage assist you.

LETTER DCCCXCII.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Sunday, May 15, 1689.

M. and madame de Chaulnes treat us here with so much cordiality, that it is difficult to refuse them a few days more. I believe they will shortly set out for St. Malo, where the king is making preparations; so that we shall show them great complaisance, at a trifling expense. This good duchess has quitted her numerous circle, to come and visit me so much like a friend, that you would love her for it; she found me just going to write to you, and has desired me to inform you of the

credit she takes to herself in having brought me here in such good health. M. de Chaulnes often mentions you to me; he is entirely taken up with the militia; it is very strange to see people wear hats, who have never been accustomed to any thing but blue bonnets; they neither understand what they are to do, nor what they are not to do: when their muskets were shouldered, and M. de Chaulnes appeared, if they wished to salute him, their arms fell on one side, and their hats on the other; they were told not to salute, and the instant after, when they were disarmed, if they saw M. de Chaulnes pass, they pressed their hats down with both hands, thus taking especial care not to salute him. They have been told that when in their ranks, they must not go either to the right, or to the left; and they suffered themselves to be run over, the other day, by madame de Chaulnes's carriage, without stirring a single step, notwithstanding all that was said to them. In short, my child, the Lower Bretons are strange people; I cannot conceive what method Bertrand du Guesclin took to make them in his time the best soldiers in France. To go on with Britany. I love mademoiselle Descartes passionately; she adores you; when she was at Paris, you had not an opportunity of seeing enough of her; she told me she wrote to you, with all due respect to her uncle, that *blue* was a colour, and a thousand things about your son; is not this charming? she is to show me your answer. I send you an impromptu which she made the other day*; tell me what you think of it; I confess, I am very much pleased with it; it is natural, and not common.

Your marquis is very good, very amiable, very at-

* In the Recueil de Coulanges some verses of this amiable woman are to be found, but they did not appear of sufficient merit to be inserted here.

tentive to his duty; he is a man. I find his reputation is quite established here, which surprises me; again, *God preserve him*, you cannot doubt my tone. How facetious you are in supposing that madame de Rochebonne cannot be always in her present state, unless by throwing stones! what an idea! I am perfectly of this opinion, and that it was thus Deucalion and Pyrrha* so well restored the universe; these would do as much in case of necessity: the idea is superexcellent.

LETTER DCCCXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Wednesday, May 18, 1689.

THANK God, my dear child, you have been bled, for I acknowledge this has very much delighted me; I am anxious to know whether your head has been relieved by it. Madame de Chaulnes, after having embraced the beautiful countess, informs her, that like her she has an uneasy sensation in her legs, which does but ill agree with the gravity of the places in which God has put you both; and if you find yourself well from being bled, she desires you will inform her. Let her know, then, my dearest child, for I shall be glad to find that my blood has not been spilt unnecessarily.

We have laughed heartily at your entreaty at the close of your letter, that I would take medicine; and, in fact, I was just preparing to take the powder and the capuchin's manna, but without any necessity, except the probable effects of Lent, and the length of time since I have taken any. So, I have been operated upon in one way, as you have been in another; I find myself quite well after it. I had visitors in the evening, M. and

* See the rondeau of Benserade upon Deucalion and Pyrrha.

madame de Chaulnes, madame de Carman, M. de Rennes, M. de St. Malo, M. de Revel, Tonquedec, and several other illustrious Bretons, male and female. I fancy I see you when I look at madame de Chaulnes, conducting yourself well to all, the proper distinctions being justly observed; for every thing is measured, though natural and familiar. "I dine in one camp, and sup in another*;" that is, in the morning with my dear hostess†, and at night at the hotel de Chaulnes. The duke is constantly employed, sending away troops, and lodging them; nothing but reviews, drums beating, soldiers, regiments, and officers; two tables, one consisting of eighteen covers, and the other of ten. Every thing is splendid, as the chevalier says, and "Every thing flies like a ferry-boat with the cable cut." Madame de Chaulnes thanked me for this comparison, and said to me in a whisper, "If I had children I would not act thus." We shall go on Monday to the Rocks, to rest ourselves a little; my son is quite impatient to be there, his wife ought to be there, and I pant for the woods of the Rocks. We shall say that our return will be speedy; God will direct our thoughts and our designs. I have just been reading a pretty letter that mademoiselle Descartes has written me; let Paulina answer it for you, and do honour to M. Descartes and to religion; as a miracle is absolutely necessary, it is easy to introduce it as you shall find occasion. I sometimes laugh at my friendship for mademoiselle Descartes; I naturally turn to her, I have always something to say to her; she seems to me to be related to you, on her father's side‡; and thence, perhaps, I bor-

* This is a line from a song of Blot's, made during the wars of the Fronde.

† Madame de Marbeuf.

‡ Madame de Grignan used to call Descartes her father.

row a small portion from my dear daughter. Adieu, my beloved child; take care of yourself, and remember that I am in perfect health. Paulina now writes a pretty hand, but for you it would have been a vile scrawl; this is not the only good you will do her. I am grieved to think, I did not nurse the chevalier in his last illness; I fancy he is going to follow your advice, and that of M. de Louvois; he is preparing for the waters, and he will do well. Our marquis still conducts himself admirably.

M. de Lavardin * is set out from Rome on his return; you will have Avignon a long while.

LETTER DCCCXCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Wednesday, May 25, 1689.

I AM just setting out with my son and his wife for the Rocks. The duke de Chaulnes is gone to Lower Britany; and madame de Chaulnes will set out immediately to wait for him at St. Malo: they would not suffer us to leave them sooner. We have remained a fortnight through mere complaisance; for my part, I am so overwhelmed with visits and duties, that I am really at the last gasp. I require rest and quiet in the delightful woods of the Rocks; I shall be there to-night, and shall be very prudent; for I am constantly thinking how to please you. We all supped last night at M. de Rennes's; it is nothing but feasting; this is the land of good cheer; the meat is fine, and well larded, and

* He was ambassador extraordinary at Rome, from whence he was recalled, after having received many insults from pope Innocent XI. with regard to the franchises, and other complaints of the court of France against that of Rome.

the butter excellent. M. and madame de Chaulnes would each have written to you, if they had not been so much hurried. Madame de Chaulnes said to me with tears in her eyes, and almost choked; "At least, inform the beautiful countess, that I left you in good health." She is, indeed, an excellent friend, who acquits herself admirably of the part Providence assigns her. I have now been with her six weeks, and, during that time, her thoughts have been solely employed in taking care of me, in watching over me, and giving me the most unreserved proofs of her affection. Madame de Carman is set out for Lower Britany; she possesses some of the most amiable qualities in the world; you would love her if you knew her. Madame de Marbeuf is grieved at my leaving her; though I am part of the day upon her hands, she is loth to give me up; she knows, however, the necessity of my going to the Rocks. I will inform you when I go to Nantes, and when my son is at the head of the nobility. My whole attention is now engaged in securing the remittance of some bills of exchange to Beaulieu, who will take care to satisfy the most covetous of them all; I am just like a ship that wants to be careened. You desire me, my dear child, to acquaint you with my affairs; this is my present situation, and these are my designs; I have not yet done any thing; I shall concert my measures with the abbé Charier in regard to Nantes.

The chevalier will settle the most important of your affairs, before he sets out. I share in the joy you will have at seeing him, and the benefit I am sure he will receive from the waters of Balaruc. M. de Grignan will return triumphant, and will not deserve to be thrown over those shattered ballustrades, which have made such convenient breaches for the execution of your design. But will you always be the dupe of this

expense? recollect that the north wind has often played you the same trick. You alarmed me, for I thought it had carried away all the trees, and consequently all the nightingales; but it is with pleasure I find there are enough left for them to sing in, and for you to know it is spring by their opening verdure; you have also gentle showers, which make you recal to mind our p[illegible] Livri. Your couplet is very pretty; the air which Arcabonne* has given us, is a valuable acquisition; it is played with such ease and success as are sure to please; I sing yours, but it is to myself. Your brother is quite dissipated; I can scarcely speak a word, or present your love to him; he will be more tractable at the Rocks. Madame de la Fayette informs me, that she has seen M. d'Aix, who can talk of nothing but your merit; she thinks you are the true bond of union between this prelate and all the Grignans. Adieu, my dear child, I must go; I am to enter our woods by the gate of Vitré; there are ten walks that you know nothing of, and my son is to surprise me with a parterre, and two new squares. We must quit this solitude to go to Nantes; this is a melancholy necessity.

This is the news from Brest: M. de Chateau-Renaud has safely landed his troops, arms, and money, in Ireland. Lord Herbert attacked M. de Gabaret, who was at sea with part of our fleet. M. de Chateau-Renaud, after having covered the convoy, for which he was appointed, came to the assistance of M. de Gabaret; the fight lasted seven hours; when the English sheered off, much disabled and shattered, into their ports. The French pursued them; and in their return they fell in with seven Dutch merchantmen, which they have

* It is the monologue of Arcabonne in Amadis de Gaul, Act II. scene 1. At that time an infinite number of parodies were made upon it.

brought into Brest; this capture is estimated at a million crowns *.

LETTER DCCCXCV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 1, 1689.

PAULINA is too fortunate in being your secretary; she learns, as I told you, to think, and express her thoughts, by seeing how you express yours; she is learning the French language, which most women are ignorant of, but you take the trouble of explaining words to her which she would not understand; and by instructing her in so many subjects, you relieve your own head and mine. The tediousness of dictating, is not equal to the fatigue of writing; and my mind is never at rest, but when I know yours is so. Persevere, then, in instructing your daughter so properly, and in affording so great a relief to yourself and to me.

When you are assured of my being in perfect health, you do every thing that can be done, which is to dread its interruption. This too sometimes engages my thoughts, and not finding any of those little inconveniences with which you are acquainted, I say with astonishment, I must, however, expect that this happy state will change; and I conclude, that I ought, as upon all other occasions, to submit to the will of God, and believe, that in inflicting ills upon me, he will give me patience; I will therefore enjoy my present lot.

* Those events are too much confounded. The landing took place on the 21st of March, and the naval engagement on the 12th of May. It is known that king James could not support himself in Ireland for more than a year.

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The coadjutor* has had the colic; he has passed two more stones. I write nonsense to him; I tell him I do not lend him my apartment for the purposes of lying-in; that he should be satisfied with the two painful children he brought forth last year, to which I was both witness and godmother; and ask what he intends to do with this cruel fertility, which will perhaps strangle its father, if it be not mollified and managed. I sincerely pity the chevalier, and am delighted that he is convinced of the care I would have taken of him in his illness. I do not understand how any one can hesitate in giving the preference to the waters of Balaruc; I was present when he was advised to go thither; after its virtues had been set forth, this was determined on. From hence, my dear child, he will pay you a visit, and this will be a great happiness to you and all his family; you will have many things to talk of, you will not want for conversation.

The idea of comparing the north wind to the chattering of the ladies of Aix, appears to me very humorous. I know how attentive you are to this sort of company: I believe you are still more so to the wind; and if I may judge from your manner of speaking of it, you wish more ardently for its absence than that of the court of your ladies. You may be certain that your extraordinary terror arises from the unexpected fall of the tower; it was not placed there for nothing, it was a paravent, and broke, as you say, the impetuosity of the storm. You are unroofed, and I am very uneasy respecting you; and, indeed, M. d'Arles might very well have dispensed with pulling down the towers of his forefathers. I did not know that he had found

* The archbishop of Arles, whom she still calls, from habit, the coadjutor, as he was so styled during the life of M. d'Arles, his uncle.

Versailles so agreeable; you tell me a thousand things I was ignorant of before. He will then have the honour of the civil petition. Rochon is returned, this is fortunate. Madame de Buri's judgement with regard to the business of the grand council was not amiss; she thought to cast us into half-yearly labyrinths, from whence we could never emerge; to involve us in all the intricacies of chicanery; we were warned of it miraculously; every thing has taken a happy turn in this affair. By the bye, the labyrinth of the Rocks is a very pretty one, our walks are delightful; my son's folly is to wish for M. de Grignan here, and to think he would find amusement. We are reading the *Variations** by M. de Meaux; ah! how well this delightful book is suited to my taste! The time flies like lightning, though without amusement, and even in sorrow; and it carries us along with it.

It has not rained these six weeks, and has been intensely hot; now it is cold, though there has been no rain, and we have fires again. I told you that all the nobility of these cantons, to the number of five or six hundred, had chosen your brother for their chief; this is considered as a very great compliment; but it will occasion a ridiculous expense. He has not yet received orders for setting out; we wish that such an unnecessary encampment may not take place.

* Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes, by Bossuet: a master-piece of controversy, in which we often recognize the hand of the great orator. But the schisms of the churches, whose doctors did not pretend to infallibility, and who laid down as a principle the liberty of examining and interpreting, proved little against these churches. This work followed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, as the Exposition de la Foi preceded it. The one seems a preparative to it, the other a justification of it.

LETTER DCCCXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 5, 1689.

I HAVE received both your letters at once; I am glad I resisted the desire of making myself unhappy. Martillac assures me you are in perfect health; and that no remedies were ever more timely administered: they have at length cured you of your indispositions; this alone was sufficient to bring them into repute. I have lost sight of the uneasiness which the duchess de Chaulnes felt in her handsome legs; she often writes to me without mentioning it. I have informed you, my dear child, of the good state of my health; this medicine did me neither good nor harm. I have no vapours, nor do I take Jacob's essence; for there is no need of medicine when we are well: I no longer start in my sleep, and my hands are well; in short, I cannot help thinking you are guilty of ingratitude, to be so much concerned at my health, instead of returning thanks to God, and supposing I deceive you, when I tell you the simple truth. I am astonished at my own situation, and, like you, anticipate evil. It is not possible, I think, for this state to continue long, and we must expect the usual indispositions attendant on human nature; God is the master, and I submit to his will. He commands the chevalier to seek relief at Balaruc, and I am convinced he cannot do better: you will have the pleasure of seeing him at Grignan, and this pause will do him as much good as the waters. You will have a delightful society; when it shall please Providence to add your mother and your son, I shall return thanks as for a precious favour, but I dare not look so far into

futurity. It is singular that madame de Bagnols, who left this boy an infant, should find him an established, resolute, intrepid soldier, who throws his arms round her neck and embraces her: he is now perfect; he wanted nothing but this degree of ease and familiarity; he was timid, but he is no longer so; how amiable he is, and what a good course he takes! *God preserve him*, for to this we must always return. Madame de la Fayette will write to M. de Boufflers; your son meets with friends on every side; at first they were yours, they are now his. I hear that the chevalier is to set out to-day, at which I am highly delighted.

God forgive me, but M. de Lavardin's return gives me great joy; I can comprehend all the pleasure you receive from Avignon; it is Providence who sent you this succour. I am wholly occupied with you and your affairs; I do not forget my own, nor to give the necessary orders; my chief object at present is to be here and remit some cash: but it is very difficult to touch it in this country; the troops ruin every thing. All possible precautions are taken, as if the prince of Orange thought of nothing but us; and probably nothing will be realised, but the desolation of this province. My son is still with me; we tremble lest he should be obliged to obey M. de Chaulnes's orders, and repair immediately to head the nobility; this is called being colonel of a *regiment of nobility*: it includes both that of Rennes and Vitré, making in the whole five or six hundred gentlemen. Our soldiers now begin to perform their exercise with a tolerable grace, and will soon do as well as the rest; every thing appears ridiculous in the beginning; I assure you there are some at Vitré that make a very good figure.

Do not suppose, my dear child, that by taking up my abode at madame de Marbeuf's, I had any sort of

misunderstanding with M. and madame de Chaulnes; I mentioned it to them, and they were very well pleased; besides, as madame de Carman was with them, I should not have had a moment's rest in that house. I was extremely well accommodated at the good marchioness's; and I succeeded in bringing about an accommodation between her and the duke and duchess, so that, through their regard for me, they forgot all that had pass, and invited her to dinner. Her offence was, having received M. de Pontchartrain at her house, having given him a magnificent supper, and said, that he was considered as the saviour and restorer of the province. You may guess the effects of such a speech: she denies it, and no more is said on the subject. I am sorry Paulina's cold prevents her writing for you; I am now accustomed to her writing, and think it is a relief to you. I have not tormented you with mademoiselle Descartes's letter, she would send it to you. You will, no doubt, acquit yourself well in answering it; it is a pretty little question to discuss, and you will treat it with an air of lightness that will easily bring you off.

If madame du Bois de la Roche's brother had joined to his Parisian dialect, his sister's horse-laugh, it would have been impossible for you to have resisted. Larrei will be with you: he is, I believe, a son of the late M. Lenet, who was attached to the late prince, and was very young when I used to laugh with him. How well you express yourself, in speaking of the haughtiness and confidence of youth! We depend only on God and our sword; nothing is impossible, every thing yields, is flexible, and easy. In a different character, and possessing less beauty, I also was sensible to the charms of this situation and its prosperities; but, as you say, a time comes, when we must change our style. We find that we stand in need of all the world; we are engaged

in a law-suit, we must take the advice of counsel, must accommodate ourselves to all, must live with the living, must cramp our genius on one side, and give it free scope on the other: for my part, I find that your knowledge of things is a thousand degrees beyond the extent of my capacity, and I never cease to admire it.

'T is dismal weather, it rains, the wind blows, and it is very cold; no more walks; send us some of your heat, some of your sun; we thank you for your north wind, but he is rather too exalted a companion for us.

LETTER DCCCXCVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 8, 1689.

THE resolution you have formed of going to your estate in Avignon, is a very good one; it is right that people who so willingly give you, what they gave to the vice-legate, should have the gratification of seeing you: a more convenient time could not be chosen; after this, you will be at liberty, and will have no occasion to quit your castle, but when it suits yourself. By the time you receive this letter, you will have a tolerable good society; ah! is it possible that the chevalier can be with you? how happy you will both be! When will my turn come?

To pass as quickly as possible over the chapter of health, I assure you that the medicine I took, was only to chime in with the authors, who say we should now and then have recourse to medicine well or ill; and I am really so well as to be terrified at it: it is not natural, to be wholly free from the complaints that used to trouble me. I know not what Providence reserves for me; in the mean while I am economical of my health;

I am prudent in my diet, and no longer have a wish to walk in the evening air, or to look at the moon; I begin to correct myself of these follies, and think it strange that even at Livri I was still as full of them, as when I was twenty: but this is no longer the case. After having read and talked sufficiently, we separate; I take a solitary walk in the woods, and read your delightful letters, with a mixture of pleasure and pain. The chevalier makes me very uneasy respecting the situation of M. de la Trouse; pray tell me all you know of it. I believe, my dear child, that this letter will find you all assembled at Grignan, and that you have not left Paulina at Aubenas; I shall be very happy to influence you in her favour, and to know how she stands with you: I assure you that gentleness and reasoning will produce the greatest effect with her; and, indeed what other means can succeed with a person of understanding, who endeavours only to correct herself and to please you? My son is still with us: we tremble at the dreadful mandate to repair into Lower Britany, there to incur great expense, without any other advantage than depriving us of the company of our indefatigable reader; this enrages us.

I enclose you a note, which madame de Marbeuf desires me instantly to send to you, to know if it be true that the son of M. de M**** is so rich and so well settled; I can answer for the beauty of his house, furniture, and plate. She wants to know the grandeur of his house, meaning his alliance; I say that it is very large, meaning literally his house; we must pass over this, as well as we can, and dwell upon the rest, which is very good. I should be very happy to serve this worthy man, who seems to be your friend. He appears inclined to emigrate, and marry his son in our Britany. I shall do my best to effect this, and so will my son, as

soon as you have answered this note, and I know whether it will be agreeable to you. This is enough for to-day, my dear countess; you are in too good company to write or read long letters.

LETTER DCCCXCVIII.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 12, 1689.

I would rather have been the author of your letter to mademoiselle Descartes, than of an epic poem, or half the works of her uncle; I am delighted with it, and never did Rohault*, whom you quote, speak so clearly upon the subject. With regard to myself, I can assure you, that if the inquisitor of Avignon will give you leave, after you have explained your doctrine to him, I shall hold it for orthodox, and even for the only rational one we can have in a mystery of faith. Do not suppose, however, that this letter which I so willingly praise, and even admire, is without a fault; it has one which I have had a good deal of trouble to correct: the writing is as difficult to decipher, as the subject upon which you reason is to be understood; in fact, it is not writing, but figures, some of one shape, some of another; it is a great and beautiful variety of hieroglyphics, which cannot fail to please the sight, when they are no longer intelligible to the understanding. My mother is perfectly well, make yourself easy therefore upon this head; she leads so quiet and regular a life, that for this reason it is almost irksome; but this is not worth a thought. I embrace you a thousand times, my beautiful little sister; do as much for me to your illustrious spouse, and give my love to Paulina.

* A celebrated Cartesian philosopher.

LETTER DCCCXCIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 12, 1689.

My son is delighted with your letter; and know that I bestow on it an equal share of admiration. I understand it, I assure you I understand it, and I do not suppose any thing more to the purpose could have been said on this redoubtable subject. For a long time I said in my ignorance, "Is not a miracle necessary, to explain this mystery according to Aristotle's philosophy? if he requires one, Descartes is in the same predicament, and there is more sense in what he says, till we come to the part which destroys it all." The good mademoiselle Descartes will be in raptures; she will say nothing, she will admire you only with a very amiable Cartesian, a friend of my son, who is truly worthy of being admitted into his confidence. Be at rest, my dear child, this letter will do you great honour, without occasioning you any uneasiness. We are here in a state of tranquillity, peace, and silence, somewhat different from yours at Avignon; you are probably still there. It is a handsome city, I fancy it is now quite brilliant; you must have been received there with great acclamations of joy; I have accompanied you in all its festivities, for your presence must have rendered the amusements perpetual. I long to receive your first letter from thence. Your compliance with M. de Grignan's wish is very proper; when he is right you should not thwart him; you have taken all your measures well. I very much pity M. de la Trousse, I am told he gives up every thing to his health; he is going to Bourbon; this is very far from Barége, whither he was destined.

We are in the sad expectation of having poor Sévigné snatched from us, to go and take the command of this regiment of nobility, for we do not call it the *arrière-ban*. M. and madame de Chaulnes are at Rennes, they are going shortly to St. Malo, we shall pay them a visit upon their return. M. de Chaulnes concluded a marriage the other day, which gave me pleasure, between the little du Guesclin, and a very pretty girl with a large fortune; when he had with great difficulty settled the articles, he said, "Let us draw up the contract;" the parties consented, and he immediately resumed, saying, "What prevents their being married to-morrow?" Every one exclaimed, "There must be wedding-clothes, a toilet, and linen."—He laughed at this. M. de Rennes gave a dispensation of two banns, and the next day being Sunday, one was published in the morning, and they were married at noon; after dinner, the little bride danced like an angel; she had learned at Paris of the duchess's master, and had caught her air: the next day she was madame du Guesclin, and had saved 20,000 livres that would otherwise have been spent in the wedding. This is intended as a lesson for M. de Grignan, when he is disposed to make a match in his government; both families were delighted with this saving. You care little about this wedding, but, as I was present, I said, "I will give my daughter an account of it some day." It is consistent with good sense to rise superior sometimes to trifles and customs. Adieu, my beloved child; I walk with you every day, though you do not see me; which is owing to the constant bustle of Avignon.

LETTER DCCCC.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 15, 1689.

What a difference, my dear countess, between the splendid, brilliant, and dissipated life you lead at Avignon, and the life we lead here, simple, plain, and solitary! This is agreeable to the order of things, and the order of God; and I cannot believe that, however you may be tinctured with the disposition of an anchoret, these honours, and this respect, from persons of merit and rank, can be unpleasant to you; I should even have some difficulty in believing it, were you to tell me so; in truth, it is not in nature, not to like sometimes to be placed above the rest of the world. When I read in the life of the old duke d'Epernon, how grieved he felt at being compelled to leave his fine government of Provence, all those beautiful cities, says the historian, so great, and so considerable; how much M. de Guise thought himself honoured and gratified by the appointment; what a sure mark it was of a sincere peace with the king; what joy he felt at being beloved and honoured there; I feel that, God having given you the same place, with all the accommodations, distinctions, and marks of confidence, which you now enjoy, it cannot in reason and sincerity be styled, the most ridiculous and disagreeable thing in the world. I think nothing should give you concern, but domestic affairs and great expenses; for, in other respects, if such a place can be preserved for our pretty little captain, I can assure you it will be a very fine thing. I know your expenses are so great, that if they were long to continue, I should say to you as I did to madame de Chaulnes, You seem

to me *in a ferry boat with the cable cut.* But they are at an end, you are now in your castle, where, though you have not much time to yourself, you will not be in such a vortex; it could not be borne in the long run; rest is necessary at all events: nevertheless if the expense could be ascertained in that charming city, and you were to pass a winter in Provence, it would be pleasant to be under the rays of so brilliant a sun. M. de Caderousse has bestowed the highest eulogium upon it, by his recovery to life. Madame de Castries's daughter is very handsome, and madame de **** is very amiable, and sings like an angel; M. de Grignan would be in love with her. Basset terrifies me; it is a treacherous and enticing game; a hundred pistoles are soon lost at it, and your journey must cost you enough without this addition. But see to what a length the rage of never ceasing to talk of Avignon, or your grandeur, carries me.

My son is going to Rennes to receive M. de Chaulnes's orders, to collect and put in motion those *noble* regiments. He will afterwards return, and spend some days with us; and then, without danger, he will keep a great table twelve or fifteen leagues from hence—this is the misfortune. M. and madame de Chaulnes are going to St. Malo. Corbinelli has made me laugh by the reasons he assigns for not having written to you: an extreme desire of writing to you, added to a thousand opportunities of doing so, and a strong conviction that it was his duty; you must be very fastidious indeed if you did not yield to such good reasons. He informs me that M. de Soissons † attacks M. Descartes very vigorously, merely

† Peter-Daniel Huet, bishop of Soissons, afterwards bishop of Avranches, was one of the most learned men of his time, and possessed an extensive genius. The duke de Montausier, governor of Lewis, dauphin of France, son of Lewis XIV. made choice of him as sub-governor to that prince.

in the hope of pleasing M. de Montausier; for it is said he does not understand what he endeavours to disprove. Mademoiselle Descartes considers it as a great insult, after the infinite compliments she received from him at Paris, on the eulogiums due to her uncle and the immortality of his name; there are people who will answer him. "What," says Corbinelli, "a man to attack the judgement of a prince, and of madame de Grignan, and M. de Vardes!"

I embrace you, my dear love; you have been in great agitation, repose yourself, I entreat you: I am in such perfect health, that I cannot understand what God intends to do with me. I read the Treatise upon submission to his will*, which is always new to me. What a happiness it is to be fond of reading! I have written to the marquis; every possible encomium is passed on this little gentleman. Remember me in the most friendly manner to all your circle. Are you not fatigued, chevalier, after your journey?

LETTER DCCCCI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 19, 1689.

I DEARLY love your letters from Avignon; I read them over and over again; they cheer my imagination and the silence of our woods. I seem to be there with you, I share your triumph, converse with you, entertain your company, and honour their nobility and their merit; in short, I enjoy your beautiful sun, the charming banks of your beautiful Rhone, and the mildness of your air; but I do not play at basset, because I am afraid

* It is the second Treatise of Vol. I. of Moral Essays.

of it: I can understand, however, that a life of such continual motion may fatigue you; and I am uneasy lest your want of rest should make you ill. You must have arrived at Grignan, according to my calculation, a day sooner than the chevalier, who was at Lyons on the 11th, and set out from thence on Sunday the 12th; so that you must have been there on Monday, and he on Tuesday; no, you both arrived on the same day: tell me if I have guessed rightly.

Madame de Vins has sent my congratulations to M. de Pomponne on her son's regiment, and M. de Pomponne has written me a very pleasing letter, so that it is he who writes me word of the pleasure I take in this regiment. My son has just set out for Rennes, he will return to-morrow; but in a week he will fix himself there with his nobility, to teach them to form themselves into squadrons, and to give them a warlike air; he is quite disconsolate at being thus obliged to return to a profession which he had so cordially quitted; he will keep a terrific table; this is the *tu autem* and *cui bono*; in short, it is the will of God. We shall be alone, but the fine weather is returning to our assistance, with good books, work, and fine walks. Do not trouble yourself, my dear child, to answer my old letters, I do not recollect them; talk to me of yourself, and all that is at Grignan. I wish the chevalier a good state of health, and that he may find some consolation for his misfortunes, in the charms of your delightful society, and that of all his family; tell me his opinion of the buildings, and if Carcassonne's is always to remain with its arms folded. I embrace the count, Paulina, and all who wish to be remembered by me.

LETTER DCCCCII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 22, 1689.

Ah! what a beautiful procession*! how holy! how magnificent! how suitable are the demonstrations of respect! how well adapted all the external parts of it, in comparison of your profanations at Aix †, with your *Prince of Love* ‡, and *paper horses* §! What a difference! I am struck with the beauty of this cavalcade, to which is added military music. The perfumes scattered so opportunely, the noble and respectful manner of saluting you; M. de Grignan's good looks, which are so well suited to these occasions; in short, the whole ceremony affects and pleases me. This is the place for the blue ribbon; this ornament is intended for persons of M. de Grignan's birth and station; and you say truly, that the ostentation of modest men does not offend the pride of others; because it is neither ostentation nor pride, and justice is done to real merit. I own, my dear child, that in the midst of all this clamour, the communion surprised me: it is so short a time since Whitsuntide, that your public situation perhaps makes these demonstrations necessary; for, otherwise, I should not

* The procession at Avignon on the day of the Fête Dieu.

† The indecency of the procession exhibited at Aix the same day, is carried to extravagance. This procession was instituted by René d'Anjou king of Naples and Sicily, count de Provence, who regulated the cavalcade and ceremony. A satire upon this subject may be seen, in a little Latin work, under the title of *Querela ad Gassendum*.

‡ The Prince of Love has for several years been omitted.

§ There are men in the procession, who dance about on pasteboard horses, who appear like a new species of Centaurs.

suppose you more pious than St. Louis, who communed only five times in a year. La Chaise* was asked with some asperity, where he met with this circumstance; he showed a manuscript of one of the almoners of that king, which is in his majesty's library. In short, my child, you know your religion and your duty better than any one; this is a noble science.

You are now at Grignan; I hope you will sleep better there than at Avignon, where you could not find time for rest. I have indeed serious fears for your health. I am very desirous of knowing, when the chevalier is to set out for Balaruc. M. d'Arles intends going to Forges; does he still persevere in obtaining the civil petition? M. Baron, one of your judges, is dead; this is a reason why you should not let this petition languish; it is true that death interferes every where so indiscriminately, that there is no building upon any thing. You said well, "Shall we never lay aside the custom of attaching ourselves to these wretched mortals?" Ah, it is very imprudent! and yet by what chains are we not rivetted? You have made me laugh, by talking to me in a style I am perfectly acquainted with, of following madame Cornuel step by step, for I see and hear you; if health can furnish such hopes, I may possess them; but God knows I desire nothing more than his will; the futility of wishes should always recall us to this submission. I still lead the quiet tranquil life I have described to you, without restraint, in good society, and, occasionally, engaged in walking and reading; your time at Avignon is passed in a very different manner, but agreeably to the difference of our destinies. My son will set out on Sunday for Rennes, where he is to keep a good table; and this,

* John Filleau de la Chaise, author of a life of St. Louis, much es-

perhaps, is the only warfare that will be carried on. M. and madame de Chaulnes are at St. Malo, they wish very much to see me. It seems we are no longer so much terrified as we were at the prince of Orange, and perhaps these regiments of nobility, for we must speak with propriety, will not march farther than Rennes; so that all the blows will fall upon your poor brother. I tenderly embrace my dearest countess, and think I am saying a great many things to the chevalier. Ah, he is really at Grignan! he is no longer confined to that little apartment! he sees you, converses with you! how happy he is in my opinion, notwithstanding his indisposition! I had written to mademoiselle de Meri on her brother's illness*; she informs me that since the arrival of the brother de la Charité, he is much better; that his animal spirits are again in motion, that he has recovered his feeling in his legs, and that he is coming to Paris in a litter.

Mademoiselle Descartes is charmed with the beauty and excellence of your understanding; she thinks Britany unworthy of seeing your letter, except one very amiable man, whom she calls her master, and who admires you beyond any thing he ever before admired. It is true that your letter is a perfect composition, and written in a style that does not savour of the dust of philosophy.

LETTER DCCCCIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 26, 1689.

At length, my dear child, you have left your charming Avignon; if this residence has not tired you more than the account you have given of it has occasioned grief

* The marquis de la Trousse.

to me, you will retain a very agreeable idea of it, and a great desire of returning. All your descriptions of it have highly amused us, and particularly your brother, who was formerly delighted, like you, with the beauty of the situation, the mildness of the air, the freshness arising from those two fine rivers*: but what you observed with greater attention than he, was the noble antiquity of the churches, honoured, as you say, with the presence and residence of so many popes; the beauty of the chapter, which represents so many cardinals, by the magnificence of the dresses†; this is so singular, that we have nothing at all like it in France. I have seen the masquerade of the Penitents, which cannot fail of being pleasing: but you triumph in speaking of the Jews‡; I feel pity for them, and pray, with the church, that God may remove the veil that prevents them from seeing that Jesus Christ is come; since the queen and madame de Bethune have not been able to convince them of this truth, they must not be persuaded by you. What a miserable and ridiculous representation of that noble temple, of that precious ark, of those respectable laws! But whence arises that bad smell that overcomes all the perfumes? it is doubtless the nauseous odour of incredulity and ingratitude, for virtues are of a sweet savour. The hatred which we bear for them is extraordinary. *Esther* has however revived a pleasing idea of the young Jewesses; our Christians would not have viewed them with horror. In short, I find myself disposed to repeat to you very foolishly all you have related, which will probably prove tedious to you; but

* The Rhone, and the Durance, which empties itself into the Rhone about a league below Avignon.

† The choir habits of the canons of the metropolis of Avignon are red, like those of the cardinals.

‡ This relates to the Jewish festival at Avignon.

I have suffered the pleasure of retracing such ideas, which are a sort of acknowledgement for the affection that has induced you to give me these descriptions, to run away with me.

But could you never take another journey to Avignon, without again encountering the same agitations? could you enjoy no repose in that fine climate, nor the society of any of the rational beings who inhabit it? could you not sleep better? that is, sleep at all, for you had no time for it. Must you always be engaged in that destructive basset? If a general revolution were to take place in these things, it would be delightful, and the chevalier would find himself much better for it: for the air of Grignan is very different from that of Avignon. You have stolen all hearts; this I have no difficulty to believe. For myself, my dear child, I am not yet thinking of my journey to Nantes; I am persecuting people there who are in my debt, though I am but little disposed for such proceedings. I have a long account to settle with the new farmer, and, in this respect, the abbé Charier will be very useful to me; I return you a thousand thanks for all you have said to him on my account. You see plainly, my love, that what I say of *myself* is as tiresome as what you say of *yourself* is entertaining. My son went yesterday to Rennes, to join his regiment of nobility; but when he is here, he never sees any other passages of your letters but those I show him—such are the terms; so that you may give me an account of your expenses and losses at Avignon. Tell me if mademoiselle de Grignan is to remain any time at Gif, and whether the coadjutor will have the honour of the civil petition. I informed him that madame de la Faluere is at Paris; it is for him to govern her, and prevent her from serving her foolish friend. All that interests you is so dear to me, and I am so oc-

cupied with it, that I think seriously of nothing else; I am, however, perfectly obedient to the will of Providence, without whose aid, I reckon upon nothing. Adieu, my dear child, who are more worthy of being beloved than any daughter in creation. I embrace M. de Grignan, the chevalier, and Paulina. My daughter-in-law sends affectionate remembrances to you: she takes great care of me without restraint, allowing me constantly *holy liberty*. I enclose a note from madame de la Fayette: you will see what Boufflers says of our child; I am sure Barbentane will never throw the dice-box at his head, in playing at backgammon, as he did at the prince of E****'s, who returned the compliment with the candlestick: swords were then drawn, great disorder ensued, and the chevalier de Vassé was killed in attempting to separate them.

LETTER DCCCCIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 29, 1689.

I CANNOT tell you how much I pity the chevalier; there are few examples of such a calamity; his health has been in so desperate a state for some time, that he can neither reckon upon past disorders, regimen, nor season. I feel his situation painfully, both with regard to himself, and with regard to your son, who will be an infinite loser; we may see all this at a single glance, without offending his modesty by the detail. I am convinced of this truth, and I always look towards God, who gives our marquis a M. de Montegut, who is wisdom itself; and all the rest of the regiment, who, to please the chevalier, do wonders for the little captain. Is not this a sort of consolation not to be found in other

regiments less attached to their colonel? The marquis* has written me so affectionate a letter, that I have been affected at it; he does not cease to praise M. de Montegut; he rallies me, and passes some compliments on the fine piece I wrote on M. d'Arles; it was excellent of you to send it to him. He says he has renounced poetry, that he has scarcely time to breathe, that he is always on wing, and never two days at rest; they have to deal with a very vigilant man. Pray tell me some news of the chevalier; I have hope from the change of climate, the virtues of the waters, and still greater from the sweet consolation of being with you and his family. I consider him as a beneficent river, with more justice than you consider me as one; he will give a good turn and good order to every thing. It is true, that the county of Avignon was a gift of Providence that we had no reason to expect; but let us turn our thoughts from disagreeable subjects; yours are but too full of them, and my letters are incompetent to divert you. You must preserve your health, the loss of which would be a much greater evil; mine is still excellent. The medicine of the capuchins, in which there is no senna, is as pleasant as a glass of lemonade; I took it, to think no more about it; and as I had taken none for a long time, I did not feel it. You make this remedy of too much consequence, my son did not even keep within doors for it; it is only intended to remove what is superfluous, and does not make you look for the moon at mid-day, nor arouse the sleeping lion. We lead so regular a life, that it is scarcely possible to be ill. We rise at eight, and I often walk till nine, when the bell rings for mass, to breathe the fresh air in the woods:

* Lewis-Francis, marquis (afterwards duke) de Boufflers, peer and marshal of France.

after mass we dress, bid each other good day, return and gather orange-flowers, dine, and work or read till five. Since my son's absence, I read to save his little wife's lungs; I leave her at five, and retire to these delightful groves, with a servant who follows me: I take books with me, change my route, and vary my walks; from a book of devotion, I turn to one of history, this creates a little change: I think of God and his over-ruling providence, possess my soul, and reflect on futurity; at length, about eight o'clock I hear a bell. This is the summons to supper; I am sometimes at a good distance, I join the marchioness in her beautiful lawn, and we are a little society to each other; we sup in the dusk; I return with her to the *Place Coulanges*, in the midst of the orange-trees, and view with an envious eye *the awful gloom* through the beautiful iron gate, which you have never seen; I long to be there, but feel that it would not be prudent. I prefer this life infinitely to that of Rennes; is it not a fit solitude for a person who should think of her salvation, and who either is or would be a Christian? In short, my dearest child, there is nothing but you that I prefer to the tranquil repose I enjoy here; for I own, with pleasure, that I would willingly pass some more time with you, if it pleased God. I must have the strongest conviction of your regard, to give so much latitude to my pen in the recital of this melancholy life. I have sent part of your letter to my son, it belonged to him: *when it is for Jupiter we change*: this is a delightful passage; your mind is lively and free; your courage, strength, and merit, are superior to any; you are beloved in the same degree. Adieu, my best and dearest child; I hope you will talk to me of Paulina and the chevalier. I embrace the count, who *is loved* too well.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ THE YOUNGER.

INDEED, my dear sister, it is true; I certainly love him too well *. I dare not tell you that I love his son also, I should blush with shame; I only entreat him to call me no longer his aunt; I am *so little and so delicate*, that I can be only his cousin. Madame de Sévigné's health is not at all like mine, it is stout and strong: I am so careful of her that I should almost make you jealous: I must own, however, that I put no restraint upon her: I let her go into the woods alone, with no other companion than books; and she falls into them as naturally as a weazel into a toad's mouth. Though I have the same taste and the same liberty, I remain in the lawn *al' dispetto* (in spite) of complaisance, which we explode from the number of virtues, when we can give it the proper name, and it is not our choice. You delight me, my dear sister, in telling me that madame de Sévigné loves me; I have discernment enough to know the value of her regard, and to love her heartily in return. We have taken great interest in your triumph and your grandeur; but I would not have M. de Sévigné witness them: they would give him a disgust to a life of tranquillity, from whence he has been driven only by a provincial whirlwind, which will cost us five hundred pistoles. By way of consolation, allow me to embrace you with all my heart; I dare not say M. de Grignan, for I have still some modesty left.

* The pretended passion of madame de Sévigné's daughter-in-law for M. de Grignan, whom she had never seen, gave rise to many jests as amusing as they were innocent.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ CONTINUES.

I VERY much approve what my daughter-in-law has written to you. I have this moment received your letter of the eighteenth, which had been detained at Vitré, though it arrived, no doubt, with that of the sixteenth. This letter informs me of the arrival of the chevalier, looking ill, unable to stand, and with a disordered stomach: do you know what I did in reading this letter? I wept, like you; I cannot endure the idea of his illness: I take as great an interest in him as if I were really one of his family. I hope change of air and quiet will restore him: your attentions have always been successful, and I sincerely wish they may be so again; pray tell him so. Let me know what room you have appropriated to him, that I may visit him. How I pity Paulina and madame de Rochebonne for having been at Aubenas, while you were at Avignon! what a difference! Do not divide your acknowledgements on the victory of the grand council; indeed it was entirely owing to the chevalier, and the respect that is paid to him and his friends; you were too good in allowing me the pleasure of performing a part in it. I wish the same success to M. d'Arles. I embrace my dear countess with true affection.

LETTER DCCCCV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 3, 1689.

IT is nine months this third of July, reckoning from day to day, and from Sunday to Sunday, since I left you with a deluge of tears, and more than you perceived, at Charenton. Such partings are grievous and bitter, par-

ticularly when we have not much time to lose; but to turn them to our advantage, we ought to make them a period of abstinence and penance, which would be the sure means of making them salutary; it is certain that this holy economy is a favour from heaven, like all others, which we do not deserve to obtain. Nine months, then, have passed, in which I have neither seen nor embraced you, nor even heard the sound of your voice; I have not been ill, I have had no particular uneasiness. I have seen fine houses, fine countries, and fine cities; nevertheless, I must acknowledge, that it appears to me nine years since I left you. I have had no letter from you this post: the delay is always a disappointment to me. Madame de Lavardin tells me that she said to madame de Buri with regard to Chabrilland's cause, which the last expects to gain, "You have always great expectations; but one of your friends, who understands these things, is not of the same opinion." "Ah!" said she, "you mean M. de Pleubet, but I do not believe him." And madame de Lavardin afterwards told me, that M. d'Arles is to have the honour of the civil petition: it is he, then, who is to be the solicitor; but I would not, I think, solicit with beat of drum in open court, where people are convinced you have already but too much credit. We lead here, my dear countess, the life I described to you: it is very fine weather; we are so perfumed at night with jessamines and orange-flowers, that in this respect I think I am in Provence. M. and madame de Chaulnes have written to me from St. Malo, and constantly mention you. Write to La Troche, she cannot be consoled for your forgetfulness of her; I know not how it has happened, for you are punctual: it is not possible that I have not informed you of the death of her husband; I expect your answer.

LETTER DCCCCVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, July 6, 1689.

I RECEIVED the two delightful packets, so essential to my repose, together. Your account of the chevalier grieves me; I never saw him troubled with such vapours, nor with so disordered a stomach. Were you not affected to see him carried into the house? You bring tears into my eyes. This has long been a subject of melancholy reflection to me. What a man! at what an age! where is he? where ought he to be? what a reputation, what a fortune, strangled, suffocated! what a loss to your son! These are great subjects for meditation, but to this we must add, it is the will of God that it should be so; there is nothing to be said to this: we must cast our eyes to the ground, and suffer; we are not the strongest. You seem to be reconciled to the word *vapours*, which you would not utter till it was explained to you. You have relaxed in favour of the correspondence, which must entirely have been destroyed if you had exploded this word; it serves to explain a thousand things that have no name; our ignorance lays hold of it as readily as of a Pam at loo. Let us then treat the chevalier's vapours properly; say nothing to him that can vex him; let there be no altercation, no dispute: his blood is too easily agitated; it catches fire, and circulates too violently; this is the sole foundation of all his disorders.

I am extremely obliged to your good company for thinking of, and wishing for, me. I own, I often wish myself in that large handsome house, whose inhabitants

I am so well acquainted with. Many compliments to the new-comer. You have made me laugh at the equipage with which he came into your ante-chamber, flying from the north wind, which seemed to pursue him. I imagine you only want this north wind to complete the building; what a convenience! it will not fail you in time of need: no weaker persuasions can prevail. Do not forget to tell me the sequel of every thing that occurs at Grignan; this is the stage that attracts my attention the most, though it be not the most important in Europe: but it is every thing to me. When I figure to myself the number of guests you have at Grignan; that this is what is called living retired, to avoid other expenses; I would laugh if I could: and I say, "My daughter is carried away by a violent whirlwind, which she cannot elude, and which every where pursues her; it is her destiny:" at the same time I comprehend that God proportions your courage to your fate; and your conduct is so wonderful, that you are always in the air, and yet you fly without wings. For my part, my dear child, I fall flat on the ground; and when I have nothing, I have nothing. My affairs at Nantes are in a lamentable condition; every thing is turned to chicane and seizures, which are carried on for twenty years successively. The abbé Charrier daily offers me his services, and to come from a distance of fifty leagues, to settle my accounts, if necessary; it is enough for me to tell you how much I am obliged to him. The weather is, as I have told you, delightful; the heat is pleasant at the Rocks; and I assure you, that the three hours I am alone in these woods, with God, myself, you, your letters, and my book, appear to me only a moment. There is something grateful and agreeable in this solitude, this profound silence, and this liberty; there is nothing I prefer to it but

yourself; this is my present situation. You say nothing of Paulina, and what the chevalier thinks of her. Is it madame de Simiane de Vaureas, or the president's lady, you have with you? Tell me all this in a breath, as well as the conduct and motions of M. d'Arles in the fourth court of inquests, without prejudice to what Rochon will tell me upon the subject. These things constitute my true *myself*. I have been charmed again to hear Martillac speak of Avignon, and of your answers to the speeches. Good Heavens! my child, what are you dreaming of? You think the king or the province will give something to my son for maintaining and instructing the nobility? not a penny, I assure you; the honour is all.

Do not be uneasy about the letter you wrote to mademoiselle Descartes; she admires it in secret, like a person of sense, who knows the consequences of such a confidence; I answer for it that she will never mention it to any one but to a very worthy man, whom she calls her master, and who is as prudent as herself.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE GRIGNAN.

I HAVE received real pleasure, sir, notwithstanding the sorrow I felt for your ill state of health, from the sight of your hand-writing: I thank you for this courtesy; I find you better from your own account than from the accounts my daughter has given of you. I had still this resource left, as you say; the knowledge that she feels so much for the indisposition of those she loves, as not to be able to mention them but in a way calculated to convey the most melancholy ideas. I am, therefore, inclined to hope that your native air, such good society, and Balaruc, will restore your health: I assure you, there are few things in the world I wish for more. You give me real joy, by informing me of madame de Grignan's

good state of health: I rely very much on what Montillac says, but I prefer what you say. God preserve this dear woman, who is so worthy of being beloved, and grant her the fortitude necessary to support her fate, and all the evils that her affectionate heart occasions her!

LETTER DCCCCVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 10, 1689.

I HAVE received no letter from you to-day, and must therefore chat with you on any thing that offers. M. de Seignelai is now at Brest; I am a little uneasy at not being able to discover the reason, for a reason there must necessarily be. I advise you to pay attention to all you learn from the chevalier with regard to the great preparations of our enemies upon the Rhine. The abbé Bigorré does not fear them, either for himself, who is safe, or for his friends; make yourself easy, my dear child, about the pretty little *colonel*, since you have him at your finger's end. I believe that the chevalier, after what M. de Montegut has told him, will not dare to repeat that ridiculous expression which made us laugh, *I know a fool*: in truth, he is neither a fool nor a child; and if his manners, which we formerly thought too reserved, be now tinctured with some boldness, and he habituates himself to conversation, he has no fault; in short, *God preserve him*: this is the burthen of my song. It seems, by a letter Rochon has written to me, that M. d'Arles has a great deal of business upon his hands. His opponents are his friends: madame Talon has been the means of making her husband protract ours, at the instance of madame

de Buri; but if this delay continues much longer. M. d'Arles will complain to the king. Madame de Feluère is another adversary; if, through her great friendship for madame de Buri, she should change her sentiments in favour of her friend, this prelate will easily surmount all difficulties; honest Rochon entreats me to believe that every thing will go right. I agree that M. Gui did not speak amiss to the grand council, but I nevertheless thought, without prepossession, that the simple truth appeared much stronger in Rochon's discourse; and this is so certain, that if the chevalier recollects, he can inform you that we were quite in despair at not having our cause tried upon the spot, before the iron was cold; this was a sign that we were then convinced that the judges were well disposed towards us, and that we were afraid they would become indifferent the next day; but God gave us the pleasure of this victory: I shall never forget it, and I wish M. d'Arles as complete a one.

We still lead the same life, and I reconcile myself better than I ever supposed I could do, to being three or four hours alone: I was so happy with you, my beloved child, and my old friends, that I had forgotten I could write prose; and I am highly pleased at finding that I succeed so well. I have begun to read a book of piety, which is better than any of my productions. It is written by a M. Hamon*, of Port-Royal, who was a real saint, and who has drawn his work from the purest streams: it is a Treatise on perpetual Prayer, joined to

* John Hamon, a celebrated physician, and one of the best writers of Port-Royal, who died February 22, 1687. See his eulogium and epitaph in the Necrology of Port-Royal de Champs, page 19, and continuation. Amsterdam edition, 1723.

He was the intimate friend of Racine, who desired to be buried at his feet, in the burying-ground of Port-Royal.

some other treatises. What I have read of it appears to me admirable; the preface is very suitable, and the approbation of the three doctors is a sufficient eulogium: when this book comes into your hands, pay it due respect; M. de Grignan will be highly pleased with it. I entreat the chevalier to tell me something of Paulina; I hope he is pleased with her. How does M. de Carcassonne agree with his brother, of whom he wrote such pleasantries? what resolution has he taken with regard to his building? if he follows his own disposition, I am persuaded a third story will soon be erected. I cannot yet refrain from laughing at the equipage the chevalier took with him to reach the old apartments of his father. The parterre belonging to yours, is now so beautiful, so well planted, so fashionable, and so full of flowers and orange-trees, and the *Place Coulanges* is so pleasant, that you would not know it again. Your poor brother is still at Rennes, to his sorrow, and his ruin. M. and madame de Chaulnes are at St. Malo. I should never conclude, my dear child, if I were to tell you how affectionately I am engaged with you, your letters, your regard for me, and the desire I believe you have of seeing me with you, and the consolation I have from this reflection; it sweetens the close of my life: but we must return to the will of God, which we should never forget. You gave me great pleasure the other day in telling me, that you were not inclined to be jealous; how just is this confidence, and how worthy of the perfect friendship I entertain for you! I entreat you, not to forget to pay my compliments where they are due. Your sister-in-law is so far from being tired at the accounts of Avignon, that three days ago she made me read over again, The Procession and the Jews; she is very fond of these things, and I of every thing you relate. I tenderly embrace you and my dear

Paulina. My taste perfectly agrees with yours, in regard to Esther; that was a pleasant day to me.

LETTER DCCCCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, July 18, 1689.

I HAVE not received two packets at once as I expected. I am persuaded that one, of the twenty-eighth or thirtieth of June, has miscarried. I shall be sorry if it be lost, and particularly if in this packet I should have lost the answer I expected from you respecting the memorial relative to M. de M***, for it is impatiently expected at Rennes: I will answer for it, that you will not contend for any of the fine lands specified in this memorial: it appears to me that this gentleman is very rich, that he has very fine furniture, and that he is a very worthy man: his son is handsome and well made, is he not? All this is well; if I should be hard pushed as to his family, I should, like M. de Rochefoucault, *be obliged to swallow hot peas.* If your answer be in the packet that is lost, repeat to me, as nearly as you can, what I have to say, lest your silence should create suspicion, like *Mary-Jane of Flanders:* I imagine you have not forgotten du Bellay's story.

This rainy and windy weather makes me melancholy; it interrupts my pretty walks; but I find M. Nicole will not allow us to complain of the weather. I could not be happy, if I did not often reflect on Providence; it is the consolation of the melancholy stages of life, it shortens all complaints, softens every pain, fixes every idea; or rather, it ought to do all this; but much is wanting to our being wise enough to avail ourselves so salutarily of this view; we are still too much agitated,

and too easily affected. It is my opinion, that those who never consider it, are much more wretched than those who endeavour to habituate themselves to it. This kind Providence, then, is going to determine our petition, according to its pleasure; its will, in regard to the arrêt, gives me sufficient hopes as to the sequel; the interest I take in it is as great as my affection for you is strong; it is of the same materials: resignation, it is true, has not so complete a hold over it as it ought to have, in every thing else it is not amiss: but, alas! this is a weak side.

When I take into view the whole of the long absence to which we seem condemned, I acknowledge that I tremble; but when I consider it in detail, and from day to day, I submit to it for the sake of my affairs; for my journey would avail me but little, if I did not pass the winter here: I am certain that madame de Chaulnes will also remain here the same time, and I shall follow her destiny. You, my dear child, calculate that you can live six months out of Grignan, and six months *in retirement* at Grignan; can you call your present residence there, with all the splendour which is inseparable from it, *being in retirement?* I wish your son could pay you a visit, and I think I also wish that the chevalier would unite the two seasons for taking the waters, by passing a winter in Provence: am I wrong? would not returning in the autumn mar all he had been doing? should he not give up one year to the hope of a cure while he is there? But, my child, I talk at random, according to my confined intellects; I cannot have an ill opinion of Balaruc, after what I have heard the Capuchins say. It is true, the journey is long; that is a misfortune; but how many patients go much farther! Your account of your eldest daughter's quinsey alarms me; it is a disorder I dread more than any; you say

she will not soon get over it, which makes me extremely uneasy. You have been very much heated at Avignon, you had no sleep there; this mode of life is admirably adapted to an inflammation in the throat. Take care of your balsam; it is an infallible remedy: I have told you the effect it produced on madame de Chaulnes, it cured her instantly: never be without this precious medicine, I conjure you. Paulina's is a strange disorder, the poor child must be very pale; you must endeavour to cure her. I find amazing virtues in your waters of Vals, which are equally good for all disorders, however opposite; if experience were not in their favour, I should think them worthy of a place in Moliere's comedy of the *Medecins*.

You give me a very pleasing idea of the manner in which you pass your time; what excellent company! you have even the pleasure of not being tempted to quit your beautiful terraces; this is a happiness for invalids; they cannot reproach themselves with taking you from your walks, they have the pleasure of knowing that they are no restraint upon you. How can your days seem more than moments, since they fly even in our *Thebaïde*? How goes on our Carcassonne's taciturnity? what has he at length produced? what has he pronounced? if he has listened to the north wind, he must have decided; it does not explain itself in ambiguous terms, and its voice ought to be heard above all others. I do not know the terrace which is your daily haunt; it must be in great request, as it is sheltered from the north wind. All your views are admirable, I am acquainted with that of Mount Ventoux; I am very fond of these amphitheatres, and am persuaded, like you, that if heaven should be curious to view our spectacles, its inhabitants could not choose a better spot to see them advantageously; while, at the same time,

you would enjoy the most magnificent spectacle in the world, without dispute.

My son is gone to St. Malo, to pay a short visit to M. and madame de Chaulnes; he is with M. de Pommereuil, and will return to Rennes. We are in hopes that this regiment of nobility will soon be dismissed; in case of necessity, they can be called together in the twinkling of an eye. My son desired me, the other day, to say a thousand kind things to you from him; I have done the same for you; his wife is very sorry that you should leave your fine orange-trees at Avignon to the mercy of the winds, and that you should say you did not care about them: what an expression! she begs their life at your hands, and that you will take care of them, or send them to her, and she will shelter them from the tempest. I told you that we were entirely surrounded with orange-trees, jessamines, and all sorts of flowers. I ask your pardon, my love, for such a long uninteresting conversation; my leisure is dangerous. The chevalier will laugh at me, and not without reason.

LETTER DCCCCIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 17, 1689.

I HAVE at length received the answer concerning M***'s fortune; she is, indeed, a little too sincere. If such accounts were always given, when marriages are in question, there are many that would never take place. Debts in abundance, lands subject to taxation, mortgaged plate, good heavens! what a situation! But what is become of all this beautiful furniture, of those immense *braziers*, those plates, that superb sideboard,

and all we saw at M*** ? I thought it an illusion, and I find I was not mistaken : the situation of M***'s affairs, like those of every other person's, savours strongly of the times.

It gives me pleasure to witness, in idea, my dear countess, the life you lead ; it makes my very woods cheerful. What excellent company ! what a brilliant sun ! how easy it is to sing in such society, " We hear the north wind whistle ; well, let it whistle on !" You would bear more patiently than I do the continuation of our rains ; but they have ceased, and I have resumed my solitary but delightful walks. What do you say, my child ? would you not suffer me to have two or three hours to myself, after having been at mass, to dinner, and till five o'clock working, or talking with my daughter-in-law ? she would, I believe, be as much vexed at this as myself : she is a good little woman, and we agree wonderfully well together ; but we have a great taste for this liberty of parting and meeting again afterwards. When I am with you, my child, I own I never leave you but with regret and consideration for you ; with every other person it is from consideration for myself. Nothing can be more just, or more natural : it is impossible to feel for two persons what I feel for you ; leave us, therefore, a little to our sacred freedom ; it agrees with me, and by the help of books the time passes, in this way, as quickly as it does at your brilliant castle. I pity those who have no taste for reading : your son is yet of this number ; but I hope, with you, that when he discovers the fatal effects of ignorance, particularly to a soldier, who has so much to read of the glorious actions of others, he will be inclined to form an acquaintance with them, and remove this defect. I am also of opinion, that by reading, we learn to write ; I know some officers of rank, whose

style is vulgar; it is, however, a delightful thing to be able to communicate our thoughts; but it also often happens that these people write as they think, and as they speak; every thing is in unison. I believe the marquis will write well; I have long wished he would pay you a visit in November, and, as he will then be eighteen years of age, you should think of marrying him immediately, and when he has provided himself with heirs, let him return; but do not trouble yourself about mademoiselle d'Or****; her father is a fool, whose ill manners and ill will put me in a passion.

I cannot help thinking that the air and mode of life at Grignan, must restore the chevalier's health; he is surrounded with the best society he can wish for, without being interrupted by those cruel visits, those *swarms of caterpillars*, which gave him the gout; no cold, but a north wind that may be called his native air, that he may not be frightened at it; in short, I do not comprehend the obstinacy and gloominess of his vapours, in keeping their ground against so many good things; it is, however, but too true, that he is tormented with them. I am delighted that Paulina pleases him; I am sure she would please me too: there is a sweet complacency in her countenance and her pretty eyes; ah, little sparklers! methinks I see them now. And as to her petulance, I will engage that it is corrected; nothing more is necessary to effect this, than your kindness to her, and her desire of pleasing you: but to expect this dear child to be perfect at her leaving Aubenas is quite ridiculous; I embrace her tenderly.

I weep to think that M. de Carcassonne should sit again with his arms folded. Ah, my dear good lord, one little effort more! do not cross them so soon, complete your work: look at that of M. d'Arles, see how high, how great, how perfect, it is; would you yield

this honour to him, and leave this part of the magnificent seat of your illustrious forefathers imperfect, in ruins, exposed to the north wind, uninhabitable, and so inconvenient to your elder brother, as to deprive him of the means of affording a stranger, or even his servants, a lodging? am I not right? Ah! my dear lord, take courage, do not leave this speck upon your reputation, nor this advantage to M. d'Arles, who, notwithstanding his little debts, was determined to crown the undertaking. If M. de la Garde would support and assist me, in bringing this matter to bear, I think I should lose no reputation in the business: but I know not how I am with the prelate, and therefore am silent. You give me real pleasure in telling me I am sometimes wished for by the Grignans; will not the eldest, who writes so well, say a word to his little sister-in-law?

LETTER * DCCCCX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, July 17, 1689.

We have here a large body of the nobility of several provinces. I have already told you, my dear cousin, that my son, to his great regret, has been chosen by this whole canton, to have the command. As this unwished-for circumstance is a sort of honour to the individual, he could not refuse it. He is, therefore, at Rennes, keeping an immense table, with which he could very well dispense, since the sum it will cost him will lead to nothing further. M. de Seignelai is at Brest, to expedite our armament, which will be ready in four or five days. I am persuaded that the nobility will be dismissed when M. de Tourville has a fleet:

we shall then have the means of making these pretended masters of the sea lower their flag.

I am here in perfect solitude; I may perhaps take a trip to Rennes to see the duchess de Chaulnes, with whom I came into this country, and with whom I shall return. If I could have our dear Corbinelli here, I should not be to be pitied; you know the taste I have for his mind, and his worth; you have the same for him; and, as the rest of his friends equally admire him, they detain him at Paris. My dear cousin, and my dear niece, adieu; there is no happiness I do not wish to you both.

LETTER DCCCCXI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Wednesday, July 20, 1689.

This date surprises you, my dear child, as well as myself; for I did not expect to sally forth so soon from the Rocks, where I found myself very comfortable. It is true, that this excursion is only for a few days; but M. and madame de Chaulnes have entreated me so earnestly and so cordially to pay them a visit here, where they are come to see my son at the head of the nobility, and the colonel's lady being also invited, as you may suppose, we set out the next day, which was yesterday, and found my son here. I am excellently accommodated at the marchioness de Marbeuf's; we expect the good governors here to-night, and to-morrow I shall finish my letter, and tell you some news from Brest. I must now speak to you of the fine painting in the style of Albane, which you give me of this little Rochebonne; for it is precisely so: I can fancy I see him, and I thank madame de Rochebonne for having obliged

you to give me this portrait; it is a charming one, and has refreshed my imagination; he seems to be a sample of the three boys at Paris. In short, these are charming productions; when one or two are cast in this mould, it would be a consolation for having a dozen; if it were a girl, *she would set the world on fire*, as Treville says, in speaking of your beauty. But this boy has really too much wit; all his little thoughts and arguments, his finesse, his juvenile rhetoric, are quite out of the common road; I should not have been at all surprised, if, after having scolded him, you had loved him so much, as to have been almost ready to devour him; for what else can we do with such a little angel?

But let us speak of that *wisdom* * which appears to me perfect folly, perfect madness: it has its source in a silent phrensy; a mad dog does not always appear mad, though he is so; my dear child, this is just the case with him; who would not think that every thing was calm within? who would not think that he was delighted to follow his first ideas, and that they were daily strengthened by merit, and even by the sequel of what might happen? what a prospect! what a consolation, to *bequeath his estate thus!* I ask pardon of modesty, but there are two lines of Polyeuctes that I cannot suppress:

> Aux mains du plus vaillant et du plus honnête homme,
> Qu'ait adoré la terre, et qu'ait vu naître Rome! †

What a pleasure it must be to have such an heir, or such heirs! ‡ by what right, and from what a family,

* M. de la Garde.

† Corneille's Poly. Act IV. Scene IV. To the hands of the most valiant and worthy man that the earth ever adored, or that Rome ever beheld.

‡ Madame de Sévigné here means the chevalier de Grignan, and all the Grignans. The estate of La Garde devolved from Louis Adhemar de

does he cast away what he received from them? In short, my child, I am lost; what is wisdom? what is friendship? have we ever seen them under such figures? It is said that he is attached to his house, I do not believe it; that he is attached to the chevalier, I do not believe it, unless, as you say, he loves the chevalier as he loves his house, *not at all*; but what then does he love? this is such a monstrous thought, that I am a thousand leagues from conceiving it: let me know the sequel; will it not vanish, like the marriage *? For my part, I do not believe there is any man bold enough to purchase this estate: but I shall never have done. I shall only say two words more respecting the dispute between you. It seems to me that you are with a dozen countesses de Fresque; you know they never considered small estates, where nothing grew but corn, as of any consequence, and they thought they had done a charming thing in exchanging it quickly for silver looking-glasses and other baubles. Such is your disposition, messieurs de la *Balustrade*: this comparison is decisive, and I shall not exhaust my simple and right reason, to convince you that gold is more valuable than quicksilver, and that madame de Sarson, who is a good farmer, is more solid than a butterfly. I cannot leave my letter at a better period. I am going to visit the good Chaulneses.

M. de Pommereuil is just gone from hence: he has

Montell, baron de Grignan. See father Anselme, vol. vii. page 976 edition of 1733.

* We have already seen that the marriage of M. de la Garde (Anthony Escalin des Aimars) did not take place. Madame de Sévigné hopes that the sale of the marquisate de la Garde will prove the same, which was the case. This estate at present belongs to madame de Castellane, great-daughter of Paulina de Grignan, marchioness de Simiane, sole legatee to M. de la Garde (her uncle according to the custom in Britany), who died in 1713.

given me so much information with regard to the affairs of Brest, that, though you may know as much as I do, I cannot forbear repeating to you what he has told me. Marshal d'Estrées was on board his ship, all his orders were given, and every thing was embarked, when he received a command from the king to return to Brest, and to remain there, on account of the importance of the place, and the necessity of his presence. M. de Seignelai is embarked: he is intrusted with the execution of this grand affair. Chateau-Renaud * is with him; they expect the chevalier de Tourville †, who is to join them, and whose fleet will compose the sixty sail which constitute our force; but there are upwards of sixty ships, Dutch and English, in an island named Ushant, eight leagues from Belleisle, which will prevent this junction: you judge very rightly, my dear child, of the importance of this affair. M. de Seignelai appears to me like a young and happy Bacchus, who is going to conquer the Indies. It is said the pope is very much indisposed. M. de Lavardin is arrived at Paris, he is afraid to return; and I have fears too, but of a different nature ‡. We should be prepared for all events; God gives and takes away at his own good pleasure.

Thursday.

These good governors received me with open arms; we supped yesterday at M. de Pommereuil's with some women, Revel, and others; we are to dine there again to-day, according to the regulation of the king's com-

* Francis-Louis Rousselet, count de Chateau-Renaud, since vice-admiral and marshal of France.

† Anne-Hilarion du Cotentin, chevalier (and afterwards count) de Tourville, vice-admiral and marshal of France.

‡ We know why madame de Sévigné was apprehensive of the visitation of the county of Venaissin.

missary; madame de Chaulnes calls this an arrêt of the higher council. She has spoken to me of you, and says you do not like me to be at the Rocks; you may believe, however, that, except in winter, nothing is so pleasant to me, or so good for my health; I am here quite unhinged with noise and company. I was glad to visit the Chaulneses for a few days; and I shall always come with pleasure, but nothing can support me except the hope of returning to my tranquil scenes. This bustle can never please me; none, in fact, pleases me but that of the hotel de Carnavalet, or the chateau of Grignan, if I am ever happy enough to hear it; for I own that I passionately wished for the latter. This duchess says a great many kind things to you. M. de Chaulnes has said a thousand laughable ones to me, and such as they are, good or bad, pray answer them: you love me too much, not to assist me in paying those who have so much friendship for me. M. de Chaulnes has really much at heart what he mentions to you; a journey to Rome, to Grignan, to the king of Spain. I was so warm I did not hear half what he said. He will not dismiss the nobility so soon as was expected; he has received orders to let them still remain on foot, without being of any utility; I saw them yesterday formed into squadrons, they make a very good appearance. My son is much harassed with them: he has not time to write to you; he returns you a thousand acknowledgements for your remembrance of him. I never lose sight of my dear countess, her chateau, or its inhabitants; present my compliments to them all, according to the friendship they entertain for me; you know how to vary the phraseology; but I conjure you to embrace my dear Pauline. I often obtain these little favours for her; love her upon my recommendation. I am yours more than my own, my dear child; this is a compli-

ment without exaggeration, and so would be all I could say of my affection for you: you make me too learned upon this subject to believe that certain people love others, when I discover effects that nearly resemble hatred.

I have spoken in confidence to madame de Marbeuf relative to this memorial, and she thinks the measure a good one: she is right.

LETTER DCCCCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Sunday, July 24, 1689.

It was said here that the pope was dead, and that M. de Lavardin was only changing his linen, and was to return again: but the abbé Bigorré will not give credit to this report, and positively asserts that he is not dead. This fortunate county is the gift and bounty of Providence to you, and calls forth all my gratitude. You make a very good use of it, but you are at length turned economist, and you will find your advantage in it. I give proper orders respecting my affairs at Nantes, they take their own way; I shall set the abbé Charier to work at a proper time; the chief thing is, I spend but little, and I send small bills of exchange to Paris, which are immediately devoured. If I remain a little while in this country, I shall be able to breathe, which is more than I did before. I should be very sorry, my dear child, to be capable of doing what I do for the sake of hoarding money; I should dread avarice, which is my aversion; but I am very free from this vile passion; I have more reason to think that I am a true votary to the love of justice; so I pursue my track, without fear or shame, in the way of righteous economy.

which meets with your approbation; it has not left me room to doubt whether it is my spring of action—I have been but too short a time in a country where I spend nothing.

I cannot tell you with what joy and friendship these good governors received me, and what gratitude they expressed at my coming from the Rocks to visit them. M. de Chaulnes has reviewed the nobility; it is a fine regiment, and tolerably well disciplined. My son received the compliments upon this occasion in a manner that gave me pleasure; whilst I could not help reflecting that I had not educated and launched him into life and fortune for that station. But then Providence immediately occurred to me, for without this there would be no end of retrospect; it would be a skain we could never unravel: here it is we meet with fortitude; God preserve me from any thing that may overthrow this salutary philosophy. By the bye, I received a visit the other day from three pretty women, grand-nieces of M. Descartes: their aunt had not said a word to them respecting your letter, which may serve to convince you of her discretion. They told me a thousand things they had heard of their uncle, which will amuse you; but I reserve them for the Rocks. There is a M. de Ganges here, who adores M. de Grignan, so that he must be my friend; his regiment is in this country; I really wish you could know in what estimation a man of Languedoc, who knows all the Grignans, and who is the count's particular friend, is held here.

The son of the seneschal of Rennes, who was so wild, and has had so many adventures, danced to us the other day; he is a perfect model for a sculptor, twenty years of age, and has married the daughter of the president A——ier of this country very precipitately, because the first thing she did after seeing him was to become

pregnant; so she was married, and brought to bed six weeks after. She is here, and believes that when her husband is seen she cannot be blamed; it is true that when he is dancing, it is impossible not to be of his wife's opinion. Figure to yourself the finest person in the world, a countenance suited to the hero of a romance, dancing in the most noble style, like Pécour, Favier, or St. André*, all these masters having told him, "Sir, we can teach you nothing, you know more than we do." He danced the beautiful chacomes, which the Spaniards are so fond of; but particularly the passe-pieds with his wife, in such perfection, as no words can describe: no formal steps, nothing but just cadences, with fancied attitudes, some masterly flourishes, and then the simple minuet-step, sometimes slow, and then with his feet scarcely touching the ground: I assure you, my child, that you, who are a judge of such things, would have been highly pleased with the harmony of these dances. Madame de Chaulnes, who was a fine dancer in her time, was quite in raptures herself, and said she had never seen any thing like it. A man of very good sense sat next to me, and we both said all we could to justify the girl, and in applauding her husband's style of dancing.

Did you, my dear child, understand the cause of marshal d'Estrées's disgust, who had reached Conquêt†? M. de Seignelai has succeeded him, and the marshal has returned to Brest. There are sixty-eight of the enemy's ships at Ushant. We expect the chevalier de Tourville, who is to join M. de Seignelai, and then our fleet will consist of sixty-eight ships. It is thought that the wind which brings in the ships from the Levant,

* Three of the most celebrated opera-dancers of that time.

† A small maritime town in Britany, five leagues from Brest, with a good port and a good road.

will be unfavourable to those at Ushant: thus we always wish success to him whom we serve. M. and madame de Chaulnes desire to be remembered to you in the most friendly manner. I sometimes fancy myself with you at Avignon; two immense tables twice a day, and a basset-table, that cannot be dispensed with. The country is somewhat different. Madame de Chaulnes has been at Avignon, and she was as fond of it as you are; she was very unwilling to leave it, having been received there as an ambassadress: she enters into all the charms of this residence; God preserve it for you.

We shall all separate in three or four days; this ought to give you pleasure, for the life that is led here annoys me: they make too much of me; I cannot be alone; this is death to me. All madame de Chaulnes's visitors come here; I have not a moment to myself, which provokes me: do not desire them to make me leave my solitude; I should be ill if I were long to continue this mode of life. The Rocks are peaceable, and calculated to preserve your dear mother to you, that she may see you again; here we are overwhelmed. The regiment of nobility is still assembled; so that my son cannot return with us. I could not help thinking with Baptiste, in an air he made for the opera, and which was sung at mass, when I saw him look so handsome at the head of the troops, "My lord, I ask pardon, I did not make him for you—gentlemen of the arriere-ban, I did not make him for you." You have said nothing to me of the chevalier's health: it was he who told me this little story of Baptiste. Adieu, my child; you know how much I love you. What a simple and common expression, to explain what is so rare and so uncom-

LETTER DCCCCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Monday, July 25, 1689.

I SHALL set out to-morrow at day-break with M. and madame de Chaulnes, to make a tour for a fortnight; this is the way in which it happened: M. de Chaulnes said to me the other day, "Madam, you should go with us to Vannes, to see the first president; he has paid you great attentions, ever since you have been in the province; it is a sort of duty in a woman of quality." I did not understand him: "Sir," said I, "I long to return to the Rocks, to be in a state of quiet, which is absolutely necessary after leaving this place, and which you alone could have induced me to quit." Here it rested. The next day madame de Chaulnes said to me in a low voice at table; "My dear *gouvernante*, you must go with us, it is but one stage between this place and Vannes; we sometimes stand in need of the parliament. We shall afterwards go to Auray, which is only three leagues from thence; we shall not be troubled with company, and we shall return in a fortnight." I answered somewhat too carelessly, "Madam, you have no occasion for me, it is only your kindness that makes you wish for my company. I know of nothing that obliges me to keep in with these gentlemen; I will retire to my solitude, which is really necessary to me." Madame de Chaulnes drew back somewhat coolly; I immediately asked myself, Why should I refuse people to whom I am indebted for every proof of friendship and attention to me? I make use of their carriage and of themselves when it is convenient to me; and I refuse to go with them a little journey, in which perhaps they would be glad of my company: they

might select whom they pleased, they ask this favour with timidity and politeness; and I, though in perfect health, and without any substantial reason, refuse them, at the very time we are desirous of having the deputation for my son, of which M. de Chaulnes will probably have the disposal this year: all this produced a speedy revolution in my mind, I found I was not doing right. After I had thus reproached myself, I said to her, "Madam, my first thoughts only regarded myself, I had but very little inclination to see M. de la Faluère*; but is it possible that you could wish it for yourself, and that my company could give you the least pleasure?" She blushed, and said to me with an air of truth, "You may judge." "This, madam," said I, "is enough, there needs no more, I will go with you." She showed me that she was highly pleased, embraced me, and left the table, saying to M. de Chaulnes, "She will go with us." "She refused me," said M. de Chaulnes, "but I was in hopes she would not refuse you." In short, my dear child, I am going, and I am convinced that I act right, and agreeably to the gratitude I owe them for their continual friendship, and to sound policy; you yourself would have advised me to it. My son is delighted, and thanks me for having changed my mind: here he comes.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

NOTHING is so true, my beautiful little sister. Madame de Chaulnes was hurt at my mother's refusal; she was silent, coloured, and leaned upon her hand; and when my mother had made her reflections, and said she was ready to go if it were agreeable to her, she expressed such unfeigned joy, as would have affected you. I did not know what had passed, but I was informed of it a

* First president of the parliament of Britany.

short time after; and independently of the idea of what they may do for me, if they have the power, it was impossible to fail in this little courtesy, without at the same time failing in all the duties of friendship and propriety; so I beg you will thank them heartily, as I have done. Madame de Chaulnes is so careful of her health, that we may be perfectly easy.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I HAVE just received your letter of the 16th; it is too kind, too charming, and too obliging. I laughed, alone, at the embarrassment of your masons and workmen. I very much like the liberty, and even libertinism, of your life and repasts, and am pleased that the stroke of a hammer should not be your master. Good heavens, how happy should I be to lead for a while such a life in such company! nothing, however, can deprive me of the hope of being with you some day. As this step depends upon God, I implore him to permit it, and hope he will hear my prayers. I never could have supposed that butter could have been included in your luxuries; I thought this could only have been the case in Britany. But I shall never forget the reason why you eat as much as they please, "that you are not hungry." *I shall eat as much as they please, for I am no longer hungry;* I thank you for this phrase. I can assure you that I am quite tired of great entertainments; *I would eat as much as they pleased, if there were nothing to eat.* This is the phrase I return you. Alas! I am very distant from the melancholy and solitude of the dusk; I long to enjoy it again; I do nothing but from motives of reason and policy. This is an invention for passing my time with a degree of languor that will prolong my life; it is the will of God; I will be as

careful of my health as I can; I am delighted that yours is so good, and at the improvement of the chevalier's. My dear child, I embrace you, and bid you adieu. We were not yet at a sufficient distance from each other. Find Auray in the map.

LETTER DCCCCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Auray, Saturday, July 30, 1689.

See where I am, my beloved child; behold me on the southern coast, on the borders of the sea. What is become of the time when we were in that little cabinet at Paris, two steps only from each other? It is to be hoped that we shall meet there again. In the mean while, Providence has thrown me here. I wrote to you on Monday from Rennes all I thought respecting this journey; we set out on Tuesday. Nothing can equal the care and friendship of madame de Chaulnes; her principal attention is, that every thing should be comfortable to me; she comes herself to see how I am accommodated. And as to M. de Chaulnes, he often sits next me at table, and I hear him say in a half-whisper, "No, madam, it will do her no harm; see how well she is: this is an excellent melon, do not suppose Britany cannot boast such; she must eat a small slice." And then, when I ask him what he is muttering, he says he is only talking to you, having you always at his elbow, as a monitor to take care of my health. This whim of his is not yet exhausted, and has made us laugh more than once. We were three days coming from Rennes to Vannes, which is about seven leagues a day; this is an easy and agreeable mode of travelling, as we constantly find good dinners and suppers ready for us,

the corporations assembled, and receive all the compliments, and occasion all the bustle, attendant on *your graces*, besides troops, officers, and reviews, which make a charming warlike appearance. The regiment of Carman is a very fine one; they are all natives of Lower Britany, tall, and better made than the rest, but do not understand a syllable of French, except the word of command; when they perform their exercise, which they do with as much grace as if they were dancing passepieds, it is a pleasure to see them. I believe Bertrand du Guesclin meant such as these, when he said he was invincible at the head of his Bretons. M. and madame de Chaulnes, M. de Revel, and myself, are in one carriage; sometimes I make Revel exhaust all Savoy, which affords him a wide field for animadversion; at another La R****, whose follies and violence are inconceivable; then comes the passage of the Rhine; this we call winding up, sometimes one end of the skain, sometimes the other. We arrived on Thursday night at Vannes; we were lodged at the bishop's, M. d'Argouges's son; this is one of the handsomest, pleasantest, and best-furnished houses possible; supper was served up with so much magnificence, as to make one die almost with hunger. I said to Revel, I am famished; they helped me to a young partridge, I would rather have had some veal; to a turtle-dove, I would rather have had the wing of one of those fine chickens from Rennes. In short, I do not retract; if you say, "I will eat as much as they please, because I am not hungry;" I say, "I should have the best appetite in the world, if there were nothing upon the table;" we must, however, reconcile ourselves to this fatiguing ceremony.

M. de la Faluère was civil beyond expression; he looked at me earnestly, and never spoke but in a tone of exclamation: "What! is this madame de Sévigné?

is it she herself?" Yesterday he gave us a dinner of fish, so that we have seen all that the earth and sea can produce; this is the land of festivity. I chatted freely with this first president; he told me very ingenuously, that he disapproved the civil petition; for, having been informed by M. Ferrand, his brother-in-law, how unanimously the affair was decided, he was convinced that reason and justice were on your side. I told him a word or two respecting our battle in the grand council; he admired our good fortune, and abhorred the chicanery that had been employed: I mentioned to him madame de Buri's conduct, with regard to the endorsement of *false* on what she knew to be true, the money that this chicanery had cost, the complaint she had made that her suit had been stifled after twenty-two vacations, the delicacy of her conscience, and her obstinacy in opposition to the advice of her best friends. M. de la Faluère listened to me with attention, and without being tired; I can answer for this: his wife is at Paris. We afterwards dined, the wine of St. Laurence sparkled, and your health was drank in a low voice by M. and madame de Chaulnes, the bishop of Vannes, and me, as well as M. de Grignan's, the governor of this admirable nectar; in short, my love, you are talked of from one end of the world to the other. We saw a very pretty girl, who would do honour to Versailles, but she is to marry M. de *Quercynisignàdi*, a near neighbour to Conquèt*, and very distant from Trianon. M. de Revel is set out this morning to visit Brest, which is now the gayest place that can be seen. He will find M. de Seignelai on board his ship, marshal d'Estrées upon the *pavé des vaches*† at Brest; he will

* Conquèt is situated at the extremity of Britany, in a place called the World's End, *ad fines terræ*. It is a sea-port.

† *Pavé des vaches*, the cows' pavement.

admire one of the finest naval armaments possible; will share the impatience with which the chevalier de Tourville is expected; will learn the exact number of the enemy's ships at the island of Ushant; and will return in four days, having gratified his curiosity, to impart all he has learned; this will be winding up the clue.

Madame de Chaulnes is just gone out; she intends to write to you. Besides the pleasure I give her, she has that of believing, that she communicates a very sensible one to you, in taking me away from the Rocks, which you represented to her very different from what they are; for the air, which you would believe bad, is, in fact, very good; it is a spot I am partial to, the walks are charming, and the mode of living there agrees with me, and pleases me. It is true, I was somewhat indisposed there; but I should have been worse in any other place. The duchess constantly tells me that the beautiful countess will be delighted to find that she has taken me from the bad air of the Rocks; this, being once said, is established. In short, my dear child, you have been the cause of my making this campaign; it is also the will of Providence. I accommodate myself to it, because I am of an easy disposition, and love and ought to love M. and madame de Chaulnes; but when it shall please God to let me return to the Rocks, which you so unjustly decry, I assure you, I shall be perfectly satisfied.

Inform me whether, in Provence, the parliament pays the same respect to the lieutenant-general, as to the governor; and whether the two presidents and six councillors are deputed to meet M. de Grignan, a league from Aix, when he arrives there *. Here the first pre-

* This ceremony is observed only once, that is to say, when the governor or lieutenant-governor comes to be received in that quality. Nearly the same order is afterwards observed as in Britany.

sident waits upon the governor on his arrival, with another president, and six counsellors; and the governor returns the visit. It is impossible to be received with more politeness than I am every where; I every where find nephews of *your father* Descartes. I have just received your letter of the 19th. It is a pleasant thing to be with these governors: they send their guards, and have their letters sooner than others. I am delighted at receiving yours; it is excellent, being full of the remembrance and writing of all the Grignans, whom I love and honour, as you know.

LETTER DCCCCXV.

TO THE SAME.

Autay, Tuesday, August 2, 1680.

Whilst waiting for your letter, I always begin to chat with you. M. de Chaulnes greatly repents of having mentioned to you a journey to Rome, and of making peace with the pope; he did not know what you derived from this quarrel with the holy see: he is charmed with, and enters into, all your opinions, and now repeats no other orison than yours, *God preserve the pope.* He says you are his good Genius, that he is continually talking to you, and that he hears you. The other day he said to me: "Why do you put your hand to your head, mother? does it ache?" I heard him, and replied, "No, daughter, not at all." This is a sort of game to us, and constantly reminds us of your love for me. I am of opinion, my dear child, that in jesting with the duke upon this Genius, which is always conversing with him, you might ask him if it has not said a word to him respecting your brother's deputation, which you wish and hope for; because this is precisely the year that he can do him a kindness: you will give a better turn

to this, my dear child, than I can, and I am persuaded that your solicitation will produce great effect. To tell you the truth, it is his right: if he is the master, and this the festival of the nobility of Britany, as it appears to be, and not of a courtier, it falls directly upon my son.

Nothing can equal the care these good governors take of my health, nor the marks of esteem and distinction I receive from them, which sometimes embarrass me. The happy arrival of the chevalier de Tourville at Brest, will make us return straight to the Rocks; I own to you that I ardently wish it, and that, if my health were not proof, it would be shaken by this sort of agitation. After having been terrified at the solitude of the Rocks, and been the cause of tearing me from them, you should be the means of replacing me there, to pass the remainder of the summer, which is the beautiful season for these woods, and where, according to all appearances, I shall never pass another. All this should be said in jest; but dwell more particularly upon your gratitude for their attention to me: I admire your governing me at the distance of two hundred leagues.—Let us leave Britany and talk of the Grignans, of the brothers who always return to their form; what astonished me was, that Carcassonne should have left it; this anger was childish, and made him say things that our marquis would not have uttered: the chevalier listened to them, and read them too with much pleasantry. This then may be called (how do you express it, my dear child?) *effervescences* of humour; this is a word I never met with before, but it comes from your father Descartes, and I honour him on your account. We meet some of his nephews and nieces here every moment: they are all very civil and very amiable.

This humour, then, is not very tenacious; it allows

reason to come into play; and the same heart that could treat his own brother like a foe, disposes him now to take him to Balaruc, at an expense that would raise the floor wanting to his building; but he is in good humour. May he remain so, may he love and esteem him, and, above all, may he follow his advice, this is the *tu autem:* I will believe that the heart is returned, and reason along with it; every thing will go on better; otherwise I laugh at these moments of friendship, which give no credit to those we love. I was delighted at M. de Carcassonne's remembrance of me, I never doubted that a little reflection would restore me to his good opinion; it will be quite another thing when we meet.

As to M. de Grignan, I defy him not to love me, and his dear wife also; all the things which occupy his mind, create in me no apprehensions; and as it still is in our power, as he acknowledges through my daughter-in-law, and as he loves my son as if he did him no injury, I assure him also, that I love him as if he loved me very much; and that I long as much to go some day to Grignan, as if he passionately longed to see me there. What says he of his master's good fortune, that grand affair which attracted the attention of all Europe? The twenty-two ships of the chevalier de Tourville, which were to be attacked in coming to join our fleet, entered Brest, Saturday the 30th of July, at four o'clock in the afternoon, without having seen a single Dutch ship: the great armament which was to have prevented this junction, and which was at an island very near Belleisle, disappeared, and no one knows what is become of it; I think, for my part, that it has formed itself into one of those dark clouds which we frequently see in the heavens.

I am very uneasy about M. de Grignan's journey;

what a shell thrown into the midst of you all and your tranquillity! I pity him, on account of the heat; it is travelling in the sun; when I reflect on the inconveniences we have experienced in this cold country, compared with yours, I sweat at the thought of the golden islands*. In truth, the king deserves all that is done for him, but it must also be owned, that he is very well served; this is the idea we should have of serving God, or rather this is the way in which we ought to serve him. I shall not be at rest till you inform me of M. de Grignan's safe return. Alas! you say truly, that Providence, of which we talk so well, avails us little in things which we have sensibly at heart; we are to blame, and our weakness is but too apparent upon every occasion.

Madame de la Fayette informs me, she has written to you, to enquire after your health, the chevalier's, and Paulina's; her son is very well at Brest. There has been a foolish affair in the army of marshal d'Humières, in which Nogaret has been dangerously wounded†. If he dies, I should like to renew the ancient alliance on that side, by a marriage between the marquis and the pretty heiress. M. d'Arles is at Forges; I believe, with

* These islands are situated upon the coast of Provence, and are commonly known by the appellation of the islands of Hieres.

† Marshal d'Humières, more of a courtier than a general, and more confident than skilful, wished to carry by storm a small castle in Flanders, called Valcourt, and was repulsed with considerable loss. Louvois, who began to fear him, took advantage of the circumstance to get him recalled; but he was the dupe of his own malice. The king sent marshal de Luxembourg, whom he hated and feared much more. Marshal d'Humières is also known as the first who introduced luxury into the camp. Gourville was astonished in 1654, to see his table in the army spread with plate, and even as many dishes and as fine a dessert as at Paris.

you, that he has been wholly occupied in your affairs; but can he tell us so without laughing?

You did not say a word to me in your last, respecting the chevalier; I thought he would drink the waters in the autumn and spring, and pass the winter in your mild climate; but if he does not, I shall still think he is right. For my part, I know not whether a desire of seeing you this winter at Paris, would have made me surmount impossibilities; but I can assure you, that these would have been precisely what I should have had to encounter; no money to be obtained but by sword in hand, trifling creditors who still strangle me, coach horses to purchase; so that I know not what I could have done to have avoided ever after the inconveniences arising from this derangement: whereas, by following your example, and passing the winter in this country, like you in Provence, I shall have time to breathe; I consider this regimen as good for you as for me. The post is going; no courier is yet arrived from Brest, but the news is confirmed by persons from thence; you will hear it from Paris.

LETTER DCCCCXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Auray, Saturday, August 6, 1689.

Every thing sparkles with joy in this province upon the arrival of the chevalier de Tourville at Brest: M. de Revel has witnessed this happy moment. Tourville's squadron was so little expected, that it was thought to be the enemy's; and when he made himself known, it afforded universal and agreeable surprise. He formed his plan with great judgement and courage; he suppos-

ed that the wind which would bring him to Brest, would oblige the ships at Ushant to quit their station, as it would otherwise drive them upon the island. This was so true, that they came out to gain the open sea behind, where they were so far from being able to incommode us, that the chevalier de Tourville passed by the same place which they had been obliged to leave, and knew not what was become of them; he came full sail into Brest harbour, where he has received a thousand encomiums for having judged and profited so well by the wind. M. de Seignelai is on board his ship, living in great style; the count d'Estrées is his friend, and frequently sends him provisions; but the marshal seldom sees him, being on shore, receiving the second visits, and keeping a table that is seldom filled; there is nothing to be said upon so strange a situation*. The regiments of La Fere and d'Antin have orders to march into Normandy; Carman's, and two others of this province, are going to Brest; and two regiments of dragoons will return into Poitou. The noblesse are to be disbanded; so that things wear a more peaceable appearance. We shall go for a day to Port Louis, and then to Vannes, because the first president is desirous of seeing M. de Chaulnes in parliament; from thence we shall return to Rennes, about the 20th or 22d, and then to the tranquil Rocks. This is our plan, my dear child; I am glad that I have given this proof of friendship and complaisance to the governors; it was what I owed them, and they have re-

* The Memoires de la Fayette contain curious details on the displeasure the arrival of Seignelai gave to marshal d'Estrées. Besides the favour of madame de Maintenon, this minister entertained for him as much hatred as she bore to Louvois. At length, Lauzun believed it to be his interest to take away from the latter the management of king James's affairs, and he effected it by the intervention of the queen of England. This, with the choice of marshal de Luxembourg, proves that Louis XIV. was already dissatisfied with Louvois.

paid me twofold. M. and madame de Soubise are gone to meet their son*, who, it is said, must have a leg amputated; you know upon what a foolish occasion. Nothing yet transpires respecting the camp of Boufflers; I think of nothing else. *God preserve our dear child;* our success at Brest makes us judge favourably of all the rest. Adieu, my dear countess; I embrace you affectionately. You drink coffee and chocolate in a burning climate, in the heat of the dog-days: be careful of yourself and of me; for, indeed, at such a distance, we should avoid uneasiness, and preserve ourselves for each other.

LETTER DCCCCXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Auray, Tuesday, August 9, 1689.

We can easily believe, that the heat M. de Grignan endures, must be intense, since it is extremely hot here, though we are so near the sea. In good earnest, there are none of the dog-days of Livri, which we thought so ridiculous; these are without rain; we are in a state of dissolution all day long, and we think this excellent for our health. We go to-morrow to Port Louis. I shall give your letter to M. de Chaulnes, but not before to-morrow, for to-day he is quite overwhelmed. The whimsical idea of *the Genius* which prompts him to take care of my health, makes us laugh still; your solicitude and attention to the preservation of my person, have made such an impression on him, that the recollection of it gives us pleasure, and keeps up a continual correspondence with you. He says, when I eat prudently,

* Louis, prince de Rohan, was wounded on the 9th of July, in the same affair as M. de Nogaret.

that he is divided between the pleasure of being convinced of my health, and the pain of your having nothing to say to him; a ragout, a sallad in which there is cucumber, nuts, and such things, keep up a connexion with you, which, however superficial, is very agreeable to him. He consults you with regard to Port Louis. He thought the other day that you wanted him to return to Rennes; I gave him leave from you to be absent till the 18th. In short, all this raillery is not yet exhausted nor become insipid.

You are acquainted with all our success at Brest, and that we have only three regiments of Bretons to countenance marshal d'Estrées there. The care people wish him to take of this place when our fleet has set sail, resembles *Trivelin's* scrap of paper, which contained a hundred pistoles. The wonder of this affair, is the silence and prudence of madame d'Estrées*. The king himself is so much surprised at it, that he has complimented her upon the subject, and praised her in such a manner as to oblige her to persevere in her conduct. M. de Seignelai enjoyed himself highly at Brest, whilst Revel was there; he loves the count d'Estrées†, and says that the count was very willing to be his friend, but that the marshal rejected his friendship. No orders are yet received for the sailing of the fleet; we hear that the siege of Mentz is raised; we expect prosperity on every side. An epigram of four lines has been made upon the pope, which ends in wishing for his relics: you know what I wish him.

The son of M. de Soubise, and Nogaret, are recovered of their wounds; you know all this, my love, and may

* Mary Margaret Morin, wife of marshal d'Estrées.

† Victor-Mary count d'Estrées, afterwards vice-admiral and marshal of France, as was then John count d'Estrées, his father.

God equally preserve our dear child. I shall make your compliments to madame de Lavardin; but a word from yourself to the good woman would be very seasonable. She was afraid she should lose her daughter-in-law, who was given over, and also her grandson and grand-daughter, who were all afflicted with the measles in a dreadful degree. I am satisfied with the memorial respecting M****'s property; I would not have had you otherwise than sincere: I could wish that he had not so many debts, and that this beautiful furniture was not so often in pawn; but the friend to whom I imparted all these truths, is not terrified at them, and still thinks it the best possible match for her relation, so that this sincerity will spoil nothing. I long to know how M. de Grignan does. Is not the chevalier at Balaruc?

You give me a good idea of Paulina's economy, to say no more; it is pleasant to see her act naturally as to the preservation of her little pleasures; there is nothing to be feared in that respect from the name she bears. I would, however, exempt love from this tenacious hook, that carries with it an air of duty, and paints avarice without advantage; for such a hook must always be decreed, and all we gain by it, is the appearance of being too much attached to it. I have long been at war with these miseries, for it is the only prevailing passion here. I love Paulina: every thing you tell me of her, gives me pleasure; I hope she will have her health, and that the waters will restore it, as well as Martillac's. Adieu, my child; I am very far from you, and very near you; I will not undertake to tell you how tenderly I love you: you may readily guess it, not only from my affection for your mind and your person, but also from the esteem and admiration I entertain for your heart, in which I hold so valuable a place.

LETTER DCCCCXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Auray, Saturday, August 13, 1689.

THE packet which I considered as lost, is arrived at its destination; I had great reason to regret it, for it contains particulars that interest me more than any; I should be sorry not be informed of all the hotels you build, and of the names which are so well suited to them.

We shall be at Rennes on Tuesday: our return is hastened two or three days, owing to the arrival of a courier, summoning M. de Chaulnes to Paris; his dispatches are said to relate to the affairs of the states, we shall see: but, at all events, he sets off immediately; I shall acquaint you with my destiny, and the day I return to my tranquillity at the Rocks. My son and his wife are at Rennes; we have within these three days taken one of the prettiest excursions in the world to Port Louis, a beautiful place, whose situation is not unknown to you. You have always that fine extensive sea before your eyes; were you to turn them aside, you would behold the frightful countenance of M. de Mazarin *: out of so many places he might have commanded, he has fixed upon one where he is not the master, but his son; and which is besides in the government of M. de Chaulnes. There is no accounting for the extravagance of this man; he is mad, and dresses like a beggar; religion has turned his brain. We wanted to persuade him to send for his wife from England †, where she is

* Armand-Charles de la Porte, duke de Mazarin, was high-bailiff of Haguenau, governor of Upper and Lower Alsace, and the city and castle of Brisack, &c.

† Hortensia Mancini, duchess of Mazarin, and niece to the minister and cardinal of that name, died in England, July 2, 1699.

in danger of being expelled, or perhaps perverted, and where she remains with the king's enemies. He always says she may come to him; to him, good heavens! let us say with St. Evremond, that she is excused from common rules; and that we see her justification, in seeing M. de Mazarin.

We went the next day, which was Thursday, to a place called l'Orient*, which advances a league into the sea; here the merchants and merchandise from the East are received. A M. le Bret, who is just arrived from Siam, and who has the care of this trade, and his wife who is just come from Paris, and displays more magnificence here than is to be seen at Versailles, entertained us to dinner; we made her husband give us an account of his voyage, which was very amusing. We saw a great quantity of goods, china, and stuffs, that pleased us highly. If you were not the queen of the Mediterranean, I would have endeavoured to have got you a pretty stuff for a morning gown; but I should have thought it an insult. We returned at night with the tide and fine weather, and slept at Hennebon; your map will show you the situation of these places: it was yesterday, as we were setting out from thence, that the courier arrived, whom you will hear spoken of. To conclude, I fully understand the advantages you derive from this earldom, and with what pleasure you send money to Paris; this justice ought to preserve the pope's health. I tremble

* L'Orient at this epocha was in reality nothing more than an accommodation-harbour for commercial vessels. It did not become a town till towards the year 1720, when all the different companies of maritime commerce were united in one, which the fictitious riches created by the system rendered powerful in a moment. The India company had existed for twenty-five years, at the period at which madame de Sévigné wrote. But it had made very little progress, and the war which then broke out wholly destroyed it; this, however, did not prevent its director from displaying the greatest magnificence, and at the same time, perhaps, rendered him more opulent.

every time a courier arrives: if God would continue the favour of his providence for a few years, this would be grace indeed. Adieu, my child; I am hurried, and disturbed with noise: I will write to you from Rennes, and answer both your letters.

LETTER DCCCCXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Rennes, Wednesday, August 17, 1689.

INDEED, my dear child, I have many things to tell you, and many to reply to. I shall resume my letter where the courier came to meet M. de Chaulnes at Hennebon. He brought a letter from the king, which I have seen, containing such orders as must command obedience, vigilance, and even impossibilities. The decisive style and manner of M. de Louvois were easily recognised, which do not ask, "*Can* you take a journey to Rome?" He will neither allow delay nor excuses, he anticipates every thing. The king says, "that he has resolved to send M. de Chaulnes to Rome, because he is the only man whom he thinks capable of effecting the greatest thing in Europe, by giving to the church a chief who may equally govern the church, content all the world, and France in particular; that he is informed that the pope cannot live long; that the satisfaction he received from the two other exaltations made by M. de Chaulnes*, answers for the success of this, which is the most important; that M. de Chaulnes must therefore set out immediately to receive his orders; that the French cardinals will hold themselves in readiness; that marshal d'Estrées will be invested with the command of Britany;

* This was M. de Chaulnes's third embassy to Rome.

that M. de Chaulnes's absence will not be of long duration; and that he will recall him as soon as there is a new pope." M. de Croissi adds to all this, "that the king cannot doubt the success of an event of which M. de Chaulnes is to be the negociator; that his majesty, knowing that his affairs are not in good condition, will give what is necessary for so sudden and important a journey; that he must come; that the journey will be short, and so much to his honour that he is convinced M. de Chaulnes will joyfully obey: he is not however to mention it yet." Our little corps is now therefore in sufficient motion; M. de Revel and I are confidants, enjoined to secrecy; M. de Chaulnes divided between the pleasure of feeling his vanity gratified by the preference shown him in this commission, which he is sent for from the utmost extremity of Britany to execute, and which gives him the honour of a brilliant embassy; and the regret of quitting the states, where there will be business of great importance, and where he might equally have served the king and the province. Madame de Chaulnes sets no bounds to her sighs and tears; absence, a tedious journey, advanced age, she sings only a doleful ditty of these evils, without taking account of the greater evil, that they are pennyless. Our return to Rennes is hastened two or three days; it is said that the king wishes M. de Chaulnes to be at court before the states; those who have a good scent, smell out the drift of the journey to Rome. We slept at Auray, and dined the next day at Vannes. M. de Chaulnes appeared in the parliament, as I told you, in compliment to the first president. Scarcely was he alighted from his carriage at the bishop's, before the prelate said to him, "Sir, I ask you for my bulls."* The others said, "Sir, we

* Pope Innocent XI. after his quarrel with France, had refused bulls to all the new bishops, without which they could not exercise their prin-

are both rejoiced and afflicted." He made no reply, but dressed himself in black, and went to the parliament; the first president, in the compliment he paid him, obliquely hinted at the honourable negociation he was going to undertake; the duke was embarrassed, and made an answer foreign to the subject; at length he returned, undressed, and dined. Madame de Chaulnes is overwhelmed with compliments: she constantly answers, that she knows nothing of the matter, that the king is his own master; so that we find our poor secret bandied about every where. We dined at the bishop's, where there was one of the finest and most sumptuous entertainments I ever beheld; we set out after dinner, which was Saturday; slept on Sunday six leagues from hence; and on Monday, the better day the better deed, we arrived at Rennes. I undertook, upon the road, to set forth to madame de Chaulnes the agreeable side of this embassy; and suppressed, or endeavoured to suppress, all other considerations; I believe I succeeded. We made M. de Chaulnes give an account of his different journeys to Rome, and found him to possess so great a share of understanding, so well adapted to negociation in that country, where he is still adored, that we applauded his majesty's nomination. He said, that if it had been to make peace with the pope, he would have refused, knowing what an injury it would have been to you; but that he would entreat you to consider, that he would not work against you, till death had worked against the pope; so that it would be death, and not he, that would do all the harm; that he would see you;

epal functions. The learned Huet, named at this time bishop of Avranches, was by this means long deprived of the enjoyment of his dignity. Coulanges, being at Rome a short time after, wrote a song upon these bulls, which was admired by every body except the pope, who apprised him that he could not endure raillery upon such a subject.

that he was delighted to think that, after all the follies he had told you respecting his journey to Rome, it should really take place; this was a long and cheerful dissertation. Madame de Chaulnes is to set out two days after him; I believe his departure is fixed for to-morrow. The duchess wants to take me with her, she says you wish it; she is really sorry to leave me; we make reflections upon the unexpected dispositions of Providence. We were to have passed the winter here; I was to return for a month to the Rocks. I promised to go in the beginning of October to St. Malo, then to the States, then again for a short time to the Rocks, then to Rennes from Lent till after Easter; and instead of this, in four days M. and madame de Chaulnes will have left the country; I shall go to the Rocks with your brother and his wife, and shall spend the winter there more agreeably than any where else, being deprived of the company of these good governors. I have sent, and shall again send, a little money to Paris; this retreat to the Rocks is my county, and this just payment of my debts shall constitute my happiness. I shall have the pleasing prospect of meeting you next year at Paris: this is my hope, and it is all I implore of Heaven; for I am undeceived with regard to the schemes of man. I am convinced that M. de Chaulnes, in speaking to the king of Britany, will propose my son for the deputation, and I do not believe this post will be refused him; I know he wishes to procure us this pleasure, he loves to surprise agreeably. Madame de Chaulnes is as desirous of it as I am. I will some day relate to you how handsomely and how affectionately she has behaved to me; but this is at an end, and it is happy for me that I am partial to the Rocks, to those to whom they belong, and to the life they lead there. I find myself in my natural state, which I will never quit but for you.

I gave your letter to M. de Chaulnes, who showed it to us; it is excellent: and I do not comprehend how a person who praises me for answering trifles so well, can think her answers to those of the duke should be either dull or insipid. I tell you that you judge wrong, for you treat these things in the only proper way, and with the greatest possible sprightliness. Revel was greatly astonished at your style.

If M. de Lavardin's * countenance alarms you, many are affected by it in the same manner; he does not, you find, return to Rome. He will not hold the states, because he would not be under the command of M. d'Estrées; he acknowledges only the governor; so that probably M. de Revel will supply his place under the marshal.

If you see M. de Chaulnes either at Grignan or at Avignon, I request you, my beloved child, to make him some acknowledgements of friendship and gratitude, for all he has done for me; it is thus I beg you to pay my debts. M. de Grignan will be delighted to do him the honours of his government; I am sensible you know what to do and to say, when you please; so that, in adding my prayer, my mind is at rest.

* M. de Lavardin was lieutenant general in the government of Brittany.

LETTER DCCCCXX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, August 21, 1689.

HERE I am, then, once more at the Rocks you so much dread, and which have nothing formidable in them. There is no longer a duke or duchess de Chaulnes in this country: they left me with great regret; they wanted to set me down at the place where they took me up*, and I did violence to myself in refusing them; but my journey would have been useless, if it had been so short, and I endeavour to render it otherwise now I am here: upon such occasions, *the heart declares for Paris, and reason for Britany.* At length, my child, the struggle is over; it cost me some tears to see this good duchess set out. She would not, however, bid me adieu; but I was awake, and I was touched with the situation in which I left her; for the brilliancy of this preference, and this embassy, which she is perfectly acquainted with, does not prevent her from being uneasy lest this long journey should prove fatal to her husband; he has been twice at Rome, but he is now twenty-three years older than when he last returned from thence. She is a woman of the greatest sensibility, notwithstanding the air of indifference she assumes, and which you are so well acquainted with. You may hence conclude, my dear child, that there was nothing to be seen or heard but tears and sighs, in quitting Rennes last Friday, and all the night she was here, whither M. de Revel accompanied her: she set out very early yesterday morning; and makes long stages, because she

* At Paris.

wishes to meet M. de Chaulnes again, who will be at Versailles to-day; so that this journey will, in every respect, be fatiguing to her. When she is at Paris, new objects, business, and friends, may console her; but she was quite overwhelmed here. I must tell you, by the bye, that Revel, who is a connoisseur, is delighted with this desert, and the variety of its walks. He set out this morning. M. de Chaulnes told my son, that the deputation would perhaps be more certain, by the audience the king would give him for Britany, than if he had remained here to hold the states. We therefore expect to hear from him; if he sends us good news, which he wishes as much as we do, my son will accompany me to Paris next spring: I impart these ideas to you as they have been imparted to us, and by God especially. When we return to marshal d'Estrées, who remains at Brest, and who was compelled to retire from the fleet in which he was stationed, and see it sail under the command of M. de Seignelai, I must acknowledge, that the most refined policy would pronounce the agitations of the marshal's mind to have been the highest disgust a man of that dignity could express. But the king, who was acquainted with the destiny of M. de Chaulnes, might think of consoling the marshal by the command of the place in the absence of the governor; as it was impossible, however, that M. de Chaulnes could, at the same time, command at Brest and in the other parts of Britany, marshal d'Estrées was very naturally with his ships and the garrisons of the two bishoprics, where he had two regiments under his command. This had not the air of superseding the governor; the service required his acting thus; it was never intended to mortify M. de Chaulnes, during his stay in Britany; and if the marshal had waited, a general officer would have been left at Brest, with the

command of the ships that are always in the road, and such as might come in; which will be the case while the marshal commands in Britany, and holds the states and M. de Revel under him. I have already told you, that M. de Lavardin is, at present, invested with no other post than that of commandant, in the room of M. de Chaulnes. We have heard that the capricious humour of the marshal, of which the king was informed, and which occasioned a misunderstanding with all subordinate to him, was the real cause of the order he received in the king's own hand to remain at Brest. M. de Pommereuil has, perhaps undesignedly, contributed to this, in giving an exact account of what he had seen; the departure of our governors has thrown him into despair; he loved them, and was on very good terms with them: the case is different with the marshal. They none of them know the manœuvre of the states; it is, therefore, to be hoped, that M. de Chaulnes will hold them with the king and his ministers at Versailles, and will send them back with all due regulations. This is the way we reason in the country. M. de Pommereuil, who is temporary judge-advocate for the troops, will be invested with a particular commission for the states; his son-in-law is second commissary; there are always two of this kind while the states are held. I think, my dear child, that I have said more upon this subject than is necessary or desirable: this inundation of words is occasioned by my not having received your letter. Do not fear that I shall turn hermit; my son would prevent this, as well as a thousand visitors he will have, who are, perhaps, too numerous. It is the finest weather imaginable, and I am going to resume my avocations, my reading, my walks, but no evening dews; make yourself easy respecting your dear mamma, who preserves herself for you; preserve yourself for her. Give

my compliments to the chevalier, upon the new dignity conferred on M. de Beauvilliers *; the king has entirely adopted the chevalier's sentiments upon this occasion. Thus his majesty makes three messieurs de Beauvilliers of a single man; this is just what ought to have been done; St. Louis himself could not have made a better choice. The abbé de Fénélon is another extraordinary personage, for talents, knowledge, and piety. I heartily rejoice with the chevalier, whom I suppose to be at Balarue. Do the waters continue to benefit Poulina and Martillac? and is fortune still favourable to the India company, in letting them play a winning game?

LETTER DCCCCXXI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, August 24, 1690.

We hear from Paris, that M. de Chaulnes was expected with impatience; he ought to have arrived there on Sunday the 21st of this month. The pope, our dear holy father, who left us that lucky county, was, according to the last advices, at the point of death; so that you will have M. de Chaulnes with you soon. Madame de Chaulnes, who travels very fast, and makes long stages, notwithstanding the intense heat of the weather, hurries in vain, for she will arrive too late. It was said, that cardinals de Bouillon and Le Camus †

* Paul, duke de Beauvilliers, was named at that time governor to the three princes, sons of the king's brother. Francis de Salignac de la Motte-Fénélon was appointed their preceptor, and afterwards created archbishop of Cambray.

† Cardinal de Bouillon, Turenne's nephew, was still in exile, as has been seen elsewhere; and as to cardinal Camus, I conceive he was never thought of, as he owed his hat to the favour of Innocent XI.

would not be of the journey; but this news does not appear to me to be well founded.

It is certain that M. de Lavardin is coming to hold the states; I am delighted at this for his mother's sake, who seemed more affected than himself at his receiving no favour; here, thank God, is an excellent appointment for him, at which all Britany will rejoice. In this case, marshal d'Estrées will have the command, with the exception of the states, so that I see no place for M. de Revel. I must own, that we have been very much exposed to the merit of the latter; but we have not fallen a sacrifice to his figure; all we have done in his favour, is to comprehend that he has been beloved by a variety of women, and we are contented with being his confidants. His eloquence has not seduced, it has only amused, us; we could not help sometimes admiring the singular harmony of his periods, with a voice as hoarse as the braying of an ass; the rage of Le R. *, like that of Medea, is admirable; the manœuvres of Champmêlée, to preserve all her lovers without depreciating the parts of Atalide, Berenice, or Phedra, made us travel over thirty leagues very pleasantly; war came in its turn, the passage of the Rhine, the battle of Senef, campaigns with M. de Turenne, without reckoning the whole extent of Savoy. Here, you see, are plenty of materials; but I must now praise him, because, in all his recitals, we have never found him swerve from truth, to raise an altar to his vanity; so that we have still to ask whether he has a good reputation for courage, this being a chord he has never touched upon †;

* See the note in the Letter of the 21st September following.

† Courage is like birth; those who are constantly boasting of the one or the other are naturally suspected of imposition. Those, on the contrary, in whom valour or nobility is not equivocal, not only lose nothing by their silence, but gain by leaving to others the charge of doing honour to truth.

and if the chevalier de Grignan wishes to tell me what he thinks upon this subject, I am still ready to take whatever impression he may choose to give me. The marquis and I have agreed to attend to the chevalier, with regard to the reputation of courtiers, as to an oracle; and to bestow our esteem, or the contrary, according to his decision. I am still of the same way of thinking, and so I believe is the marquis; I entreat him, therefore, to tell me how I should consider M. de Revel*. My opinion seems to be perfectly fixed, with regard to the marquis's merit, his industry and emulation are his vouchers. Never was there such a happy presage: *God preserve him, God preserve him.*

I should be delighted to have a picture of Paulina; bring one with you; I am sure she will please me. I have a tolerably good idea of her; I take a little of the count des Chapelles, a little of the Grignan beauty, and with these compose a very pretty personage, with a noble air, with fine understanding, and an understanding which suits well upon her; and I caress and embrace her cordially. Preserve yourself, my dear countess, for your family, your son, and your mother. I do not prohibit your eating melons, since you have such good wine to mellow them. M. de Chaulnes forbade them to me in your name, and I submitted, because they were not good; but he was obliged to let me perspire; and I returned at night to Auray, after a moderate walk, just as if I had come from playing a

* Charles-Amadeus de Broglio, count de Revel, lieutenant-general of the king's armies, afterwards knight of his orders. He was the brother of Victor-Maurice count de Broglio, marshal of France, and uncle of Francis duke marshal de Broglio.

It was he who, in the campaign of 1702, saved Cremona, and retook it from prince Eugene, at the very moment in which the latter had taken it by surprise, with his presumptuous general, marshal de Villeroi.

game at tennis. I changed my dress, and came to supper cool and refreshed; I laughed at myself the first, that others might not laugh at me; and with this I am in perfect health. It was very hot, and I have always been subject to perspiration; and I think it best, not to seek to change one's constitution: I do not think this should be styled an *effervescence*; my pot did not boil more fiercely, and there was no occasion to scum it oftener than usual. I think I told you that M. de Chaulnes spoke to us several times very kindly about the deputation, saying it was his business, and I expect to hear some news respecting it shortly. My son is gone upon a visit of pleasure four leagues from Rennes. He read that part of your letter the other day, where you say, you wish me with you. "Yes, doubtless, I wish it; I have as much right to her as THE REST. Adieu to THE REST." This appeared to him so humorous, that he laughed most heartily. As THE REST appeared dry, and then came *adieu* to THE REST.

I ardently wish that M. de Grignan's disorder may have left him. I perceive your uneasiness, which is not trifling, and it is a miracle that your health can support it. The match between mademoiselle Le Camus and madame de Maison's son, appears to me a very proper one: M. d'Arles will be present at this wedding, upon his return from the waters.

LETTER DCCCCXXII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, August 28, 1689.

I HAVE not received your letter, and I shall receive two at once to morrow; I know not what to do with this interruption, which often happens. It is unfortunate that it should occur when I was waiting with so much impatience for news of M. de Grignan, whose illness will, I hope, be attended with no dangerous consequences; I cannot, however, help being very uneasy respecting him: the time seems long from Friday noon to Monday noon. I have just received a letter from the marquis, who is a wing or a foot of you, which has given me pleasure. The dear little captain tells me, he remembers that it is an age since he wrote to me. He gives me his reasons for not writing so often as he could wish to do; mentions M. de Boufflers's * friendship for him, and maintains that he is indebted for it to me. He tells me the news of his camp, their hopes of finishing the campaign by joining some army; sends a thousand remembrances to his uncle and aunt: his style begins to be formed, and so much good sense appears throughout his letter, that, I say more than ever, like flint and steel, his genius only wants to be struck, to produce every desirable spark. And see how bright his military disposition has shone, early as it was struck: could we ever have supposed that so laborious a profession would suit his taste? He has displayed application, vigilance, emulation, courage, in short, every thing; it seems to be his destined vocation; he is a

* Louis-Francis, marquis, (since duke) de Boufflers, peer and marshal of France.

dear, amiable child. *God preserve him*, for I can never conclude in any other way.

But, my dear child, God has not preserved this pope, who was so essential to your life and to your comfort: Avignon, whose good fruits you had just begun to taste, is going to disappear. I think of nothing but your interest; for I set Europe and politics out of the question, and thought, if the holy father's days had been prolonged as much as those of M. d'Arles, it would have been a great blessing: but we are not the disposers of events; this we feel every instant; and we must bow down to the hand of Omnipotence. M. de Chaulnes arrived on Sunday the 21st at Versailles, where, I learn, he met with a very gracious reception from every body, the king having set the example. I know not whether he has had time to enter upon the affairs of Britany, and the deputation; it was his intention, and it is his business, since, if my son is appointed, it will be seen that he is the master; if not, the contrary will be equally evident, and this cannot be a matter of indifference to him: he has always spoken to us unreservedly in these terms; with us he displays neither the governor nor the ambassador. We expect news of this deputation, however, with less impatience than that of M. de Grignan's health. Madame de Chaulnes must have arrived yesterday at Paris; and it must have been precisely to-day, or yesterday (Saturday), that M. de Chaulnes must have set out; this is keeping time very nicely. The king has given him 50,000 livres to defray the expenses of his journey, which is very handsome; we did not expect so much. Coulanges accompanies him to Rome; he has written me a long parting letter, in which he talks much of you. This must be a pleasant journey in so fine a season of the year. The good pope died on the 12th, the king has received offi-

cial notification of the event: the question now is, the ambassador and the cardinals are expected. This seems to me the epocha, which will terminate cardinal de Bouillon's misfortunes; but cardinal Le Camus does not go; how comes this? My dear child, I am sorry on account of his brothers, whom we love, and who love us. M. de Lavardin holds the states; he would not be sorry to give us this deputation. I know not what marshal d'Estrées will do during the meeting of the states; this is the finest part of his command. Adieu, my beloved; I do not pretend to tell you news, I merely talk of what occurs. M. de la Garde is so well informed by the marchioness d'Huxelles *, that you know more than those at Paris. The marquis d'Huxelles fills a great post at Mentz †. We expect intelligence here of our fleet; it has been a long time at sea.

I no longer know where I am at Grignan; I could not play at blindman's-buff there, I know not whom I have to deal with. Has M. de Carcassonne taken the chevalier to Balaruc? Is M. de la Garde at home? You will pay my compliments to all, as you see occasion. I always embrace M. de Grignan, and wish him perfect health. I do not tell you, my child, all I wish you, I should be lost in a labyrinth of different wishes: I am not less terrified than yourself at our long separation; but it is the will of God, and our business requires it. Myson, his wife, this pleasant habitation, company sometimes, books, conversation, walks; and at Rennes

* Mary de Bailleul, marchioness d'Huxelles, was mother of Nicholas du Blé, marquis and afterwards marshal d'Huxelles.

† The city of Mentz was besieged by prince Charles of Lorrain. It was invested on the thirtieth of May, and the trenches were opened on the twenty-second of June. The marquis d'Huxelles had the command, but, after making a vigorous defence, he was obliged to capitulate on the 8th of September following, for want of powder and muskets.

in Lent: all this will have passed, and a portion of life with it; which is a painful reflection to those who have lived long; but we must have fortitude, and make a merit of the impossibility of doing better.

LETTER DCCCCXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, August 31, 1689.

Your chateau seems to me to make the finest appearance possible; two tables served at the same moment, give me a high opinion of Flame *; he is at least another Honoré †. These abilities are a great relief to the mind of the mistress of a house; but this magnificence is very destructive; it is not a trifle, to support such a splendid and elegant style, in such a house as yours. I have just seen a representation of it, in the stroke of a wand, flourished by Honoré, which makes every thing he pleases rise out of the earth at his command. I know the charms, and even the necessity, of such manners, but I likewise see the consequences, and so do you. You remind me of our poor abbé de Pontcarré, in speaking of Champigny: he seems to me to be related to him in every respect, except that he did not eat so much; for the Trojan and the Papoul are not at all wiser, and our Pontcarré seemed to think of nothing but feasting. I formerly said of the late M. de Rennes ‡, that he marked the leaves of his breviary

* M. de Grignan's steward.

† M. de Chaulnes's steward.

‡ Charles-Francis de la Vieuville, bishop of Rennes, died the 29th of January, 1676.

with slices of ham; your Valence * would not despise this kind of signet; indeed his face was a perfect luminary of the church, and, as soon as twelve struck, *monseigneur* laid aside all business. M. de Grignan will be pleased to see his old friend Canaples at his house, who is going to the waters of Vals, because he is at Paris; and M. d'Arles is going to Forges, because he is in the neighbourhood of Vals; so true it is, even to these very fountains, *that no one is a prophet in his own country;* I address this to M. d'Arles. I like what you said upon first seeing Larrey, "Is it you?" and his ready answer, "No, madam, it is not I," is such a specimen of vivacity, as shows him to be his father's own son, who had a great share of wit, somewhat coarse, indeed, but lively and pleasant.

But to return to the good de Chaulnes. I related to you the sequel of the courier's arrival at Hennebon, that the king did not wish the affair to be made public, and that every one at Vannes complimented the duke and duchess on the occasion. We made the duke relate to us, in his carriage, all the particulars of his former journeys to Rome; you would have been very much amused. No one is more endowed with the true spirit of negociation; the *mezzo termine* never fail him. I desired him to write an account of all these details, and said to him, "O how well judged it is to send you on this embassy!" We returned to Rennes on the 15th, and he set out on the 18th, in a chaise, and arrived on Sunday the 21st at Versailles: the king sent for him, though covered with dust, and conferred with him for half an hour in his closet. Heaven knows how all the courtiers embraced him, and even M. de Rheims (Letellier); a man that is going to Rome, can no longer

* William Bochard de Champigny, nominated bishop of Valence in 1687, and consecrated in November 1693.

be indifferent to him. He set out on Saturday the 27th, and will go by way of your Rhone, so that you might see him with a good telescope. The cardinals are to join him at Lyons; there are twenty-eight galleys at Toulon, which are to take them to Leghorn. Coulanges is of the party. You have done well, to write to these good governors; I am delighted to think you improved the opportunity, and I thank you; it is thus I repay their friendship. They wanted to take me with them at all events; madame de Chaulnes entreated me in such a manner as to make a refusal embarrassing to me: but Chaulnes is not like the Rocks, where I am settling my affairs; besides, she will not remain there long, she must necessarily enjoy the pleasure of a gracious reception at Versailles. The king and his ministers look with pleasure on the wife of a man who is negociating the most important business in which it is possible to engage, who is no longer young, and yet flies to execute his commission as he did twenty-three* years before. A person is of some consequence at Versailles, upon such occasions as these: M. de Chaulnes desired her earnestly not to absent herself. The good duchess reached Paris in six days; she and her horses had like to have perished by the heat: I find it intense only in this part of the world; your north wind tempers the dog-days. Madame de Chaulnes arrived two days before her husband's departure; she writes to me with great friendliness; she will inform me what M. de Chaulnes has done respecting the deputation: I am convinced that they are both more anxious about it than I am; it is their business, and they feel that it is so. I will some day give you an instance of the duchess's friendship, which will please you. You are a

* There was an interval of twenty-three years between M. de Chaulnes's second embassy to Rome and this third.

good and amiable *genius* for having written to M. de Chaulnes. Your brother returns you a thousand thanks, and embraces you a thousand times. This is saying a good deal upon the same subject, I ask your pardon the reason is, that in retirement things of this kind make a deep impression.

We had, however, a visit on Monday, from M. de la Faluere, his wife, daughter, and son; they supped and slept here, and were delighted with our walks. I know not what to tell you respecting our fleet; we have heard nothing of it, since the succour you sent us, and since this armament has been at sea. A man of wit said, the other day, at Rennes, that he had never seen or heard of a complete naval victory, since the battle of Actium; and that all engagements consist in a few broadsides, in dispersing the ships, which are supposed to be sunk, and which appear again in the course of a month; this seemed to us to be the truth. But what say you to the command in Britany, which ought to content marshal d'Estrées, notwithstanding he is deprived of the trifling circumstance of holding the states, which is reserved for M. de Lavardin? This situation was due to the latter, because it is right that every one should have his turn. You do not think M. de Lavardin will be against us, if we obtain the deputation. I understand that the marshal's lady gives herself very little trouble about these trifles, provided she can be at Marli or Trianon. Adieu then, my beloved child; I am persuaded that you will entertain our good duke very handsomely, upon his return from Rome. I lament the pope, I lament Avignon. *God gave it, and God has taken it away.* Remember me in the most friendly manner to those around you; I imagine two of the Grignans are at Balaruc. Good heavens! what a translation of madame de Noailles to

Perpignan! how is it possible for her to be absent from Versailles without being pregnant?

LETTER DCCCCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 4, 1680.

It is true that I assumed an air of mystery; M. de Chaulnes intrusted me with his secret in secret: M. de Croisi informed me that he was not yet to mention it; so that I was faithful to my trust, even in Provence. I underlined some words, however, which might, I think, have given you to understand that I would tell you more the first opportunity. I also told you that we found our secret circulated at Vannes, and how strange this appeared to us. I informed you of the joy of M. de Chaulnes; I told you that his wife, shutting her eyes to all the brilliant side of the question, opened them only to the dangers and perils of so long a journey; we exerted ourselves to divert her from this melancholy prospect, and to make her fix her attention upon the beauty and distinction of the choice so properly conferred by the king, which would create so much envy at Versailles. In short, Revel and I exhausted our rhetoric, and M. de Chaulnes supported us: those who say he hesitated, little know him; he is a man who cannot do things with an ill grace, or bargain with his master. This is the true answer he made him, I think I can tax my memory with this charge: "Sire, your majesty commands, and I obey. I shall set out immediately to wait upon you, and receive your commands," &c. Such were the *objections* he made. He set out with great joy, as I have told you, and left all Britany in

great affliction. Madame de Chaulnes went the next day, and arrived in six days at Paris; she has written to me twice, and informs me, that if she had not been thus diligent, she should not have seen M. de Chaulnes; that she was only with him an hour, and that she will send me news of our affairs. I have done well, my dear child, not to go with her, for two reasons; the first is, that she will be very little at Chaulnes, and the second, that, when there, that retreat would not be so natural to me as this is, where I have my son's company, and where I have two considerable estates that may oblige me to remain some time in this province. When you reflect a little, I believe you will find that I am right, and that, if I had returned, I should have frustrated the intention of my journey into Britany, by shortening it. My son and his wife are charmed with my remaining here till Lent. I then purpose to go to Rennes, out of complaisance to them, and because Lent is a more melancholy time in the country than winter; but as things may change, we must not look so far forward. It is certain that the air here is very good, and you wrong it to think otherwise. We have had the finest weather in the world for these two months past, hot in the dog-days, a charming September, none of your violent north winds which make Canaples and your chateau tremble. I hope, however, to tremble there as well as the rest.

I know not how our deputation stands; my son says that his ill luck has killed the pope, to deprive us of M. de Chaulnes; and though the duke, upon his retiring from the king's closet, said to M. de Lavardin, who was to hold the states, "Sir, I beg that M. de Sévigné may have the deputation," the same ill luck prevails; for M. de Lavardin is not to hold them, but marshal d'Estrées.

M. de Lavardin was delighted at having this commission, and an opportunity of obliging my son; it is very probable that M. de Chaulnes had apprised the king of it, as he spoke so freely to M. de Lavardin. But the marshal wrote to his majesty to complain that he was deprived of the principal function of his command, which was even specified in his commission. The king told M. de Croissi, that his intention was not to have included in it the states; M. de Croissi acknowledged that he had made no distinction: the king seemed angry, but finding the marshal was not in the wrong, he said, "The marshal then must be informed that he is to hold them, and M. de Lavardin must be told that he cannot." The latter, like a good courtier, submitted with respect to his master's will. This is what madame de Lavardin informs me, accompanied with a thousand friendly expressions, and regrets that her son has it not in his power to serve mine. Madame de la Fayette, however, has sent me a letter for marshal d'Estrées, in which she entreats him, with all the earnestness possible, to give this deputation to my son, of whom she says a thousand kind things: she adds, that her friendship for me makes her take as great an interest in this affair, as if she pleaded for her own son. I have accompanied this letter with another, and so has Sévigné: we shall see what all these engines will produce. Madame de la Fayette tells me, that madame de Chaulnes is far from being dormant upon this occasion; so that I imagine, if M. de Chaulnes has obtained the king's approbation of his choice in favour of my son, the ge- duchess will prevail upon M. de Croissi to write to marshal d'Estrées, and it will be finished. This is a long harangue, your friendship exposes you to such tremendous details: I have not had time to shorten it, as a

great wit says *; but as you wish to know every thing, such is the state of affairs with us, and we are more resigned to Providence in these matters than you can possibly imagine. This is not the case with regard to your loss of Avignon, and your fine county; what a delightful residence! how pleasant to pass the winter there! what a blessing was this income, which you so properly applied! what a loss! what a misreckoning! I am sorely grieved at it; *my Genius* will often complain to the good duke de Chaulnes, in proportion as he accommodates matters, and thereby deprives you of Avignon. Nothing is so strange as this sudden change of climate, which makes him take a leap from Auray to within two leagues of Grignan; for he is upon your Rhone, from thence he goes to Rome, and will certainly not return from that city without visiting you; nothing less can console him for the interruption of his intercourse with the amiable *Genius*. Nothing more clearly proves that people must meet; it is now your turn to tell me some news of M. de Chaulnes. I must say a word or two of my dear Paulina; was I not right in my predictions, that the desire of pleasing you would make her amiable? She should not be driven roughly, you find how gentleness operates upon her mind; it gives me real joy, as well upon her account as yours, for you cannot but love this little child, who will be an agreeable companion for you. Adieu, my child; I love you for many reasons, but particularly, because you love me; this is a very cogent one, and one that will not loose its prey.

* At the end of the sixteenth of the Lettres Provinciales, Pascal says: "I have only made this longer than the rest, because I have not had time to shorten it."

LETTER DCCCCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 7, 1689

MADAME de la Fayette has written again to marshal d'Estrées, to desire him not to engage himself, telling him, these are not mere words of course; that she is more solicitous to obtain for us what she requests of him than if it were for her own son; and that every measure was taken at court to crown the business in question with success: she acts according to the advice of madame de Chaulnes this second time. Nothing can equal the good duchess's friendship for me, nor the pains she takes to oblige me; she is a true and active friend. Madame de la Fayette is delighted with her conduct, madame de Lavardin cordially unites her forces; so that I can do nothing but thank these three people. I will acquaint you with the event.

I am convinced that you have had, at least, one letter from M. de Chaulnes; he flies as swiftly as a bird. His majesty gave him 50,000 livres for this purpose: I heartily wish you had as much to console you for the death of the pope. Our fleet is returned peaceably to Belleisle, and M. de Seignelai has flown back to Versailles; for he is a bird too, but of smaller size than the duke de Chaulnes. You find that our wit was in the right, in saying there had been no sea-fights since the battle of Actium. Marshal d'Humieres should not have endeavoured to take Valcourt at the first onset*; if these gentlemen are not successful, the world is very apt to condemn their conduct. It is said the marshal's

* Marshal d'Humieres wishing to force the post of Valcourt, on the 27th August, lost many men, and was obliged to retire.

lady gives out that the friends her husband has lost upon this occasion, prevent her from enjoying *his victory*. M. de Boufflers has performed a brilliant action *; I believe our marquis was concerned; he is very well, so that we have nothing to do but to thank God. What emotion I feel, when I hear the name of M. de Boufflers! M. de Revel is here with two beauties from Rennes, one of whom he is said to be in love with; this woman understands raillery, I do not believe she is in earnest with our passing hero: it is a great amusement to us; they will stay here three or four days. I do not love dealing in contraband goods; but if I chose, I believe I could be useful in the conversation. The poor marchioness de Marbeuf is laid up at Rennes with a violent cold; for my part, my health is so good, that I am sometimes astonished at it; I have none of the little aches or pains that are so common; I seem to be too fortunate in this respect, and I receive it at the hand of Providence in the same manner as I should the contrary, were it so ordained. And are you, my child, no longer troubled with those nervous affections, headaches, and pains in your legs? is your beautiful machine in good order? Madame de Coulanges informs me that she has repaired hers by bathing; she is going back to Brevannes with a love for solitude, which even she herself is at a loss to comprehend; she complains that you have been the first to break off a correspondence that gave her so much pleasure; nothing can afford her comfort in this respect, but the hope of your renewing it when you are together, for she has observed, with grief, that your return will absolutely destroy this correspondence, which always afflicts her; in short, she is all politeness.

* The marquis de Boufflers attacked Kocheim upon the Moselle, August 26, and carried it by assault.

A great event has taken place. The count de Revel set out this morning at day-break; he remained here only one day. The ladies are astonished, and will now find the time hang heavy on their hands. He gave my son serious reasons for his precipitancy; he said he was not willing to mortify a certain lady; this made us laugh: generally speaking, women are strange creatures, as M. de Rochefoucault well knew.

Adieu, my best and dearest child: it is supposed that our parliament will return to Rennes, and no doubt that of Guyenne to Bourdeaux: traffic and barter are always uppermost; money does every thing. I must kiss Paulina, and rejoice that she is worthy of your love.

LETTER DCCCCXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 11, 1689.

If I had been with you the day you wrote to me, or my *Genius* had been at Grignan as yours was at Auray, I would have said to you, "Daughter, you are jesting, to expect M. de Chaulnes to-day or to-morrow: he is still at Paris, and will not set out till the twenty-eighth, so that he cannot be with you till the third of September;" but my *Genius* does not travel like yours; and our good duke, who so well knew how to converse with, and answer it, would not take the same care of mine. I own, I should be charmed at your seeing him: and how droll a circumstance it would have been, if you had received in his presence letters written by me from Britany when I was in his house, and in which I speak of him! for he has long been the principal subject of my letters. In short, my dear, we shall see what will happen from his passing so near you: I cannot help

thinking there will be at least some little *Coulanges*, some letter, some compliment, some notice, or some remembrance. The good duchess always says: "As to the beautiful countess, M. de Chaulnes loves her dearly; he esteems her, and is quite happy when he is with her." We shall see what this will produce: I sincerely wish that the interest he took in my son, by desiring M. de Lavardin to give him the deputation, may be approved by his majesty; for as to marshal d'Estrées, he certainly will not refuse madame de la Fayette. Do you not wonder at this sudden and surprising change, which seems exactly calculated to derange all our plans? We cannot yet comprehend how the duke could have spoken in the way he did to M. de Lavardin, if he had not said a word to the king; but this is still a mystery. We have written to madame de la Fayette, that we thought it natural for M. de Lavardin to inform his majesty of what M. de Chaulnes had said to him, when he believed M. de Lavardin was to hold the states; that M. de Revel thought the same, and that we sent the idea to her for improvement. I am convinced that madame de Chaulnes will do all in her power; so that I sleep, and leave this to be unravelled you know where.

I am not quite so easy with respect to our poor marquis; the army is every where so much in motion, that we may believe the flying camp of Boufflers will not remain inactive. They performed a very brilliant action, while marshal d'Humieres suffered himself to be beaten at Valcourt. This monkey * to enter sword in hand, [illegible] the castle, and kill or carry off eleven or twelve hundred men! Figure to yourself this infant become a man, a soldier, a firebrand; my child, there

* The marquis de Grignan.

would be no supporting these reflections, if we did not at the same time consider, that God will preserve him; and that he whom He protects is well protected. Indeed, you are right in saying, I am neither indifferent to this child, nor to your affairs; I not only interest myself, and take my part in them, but I am over head and ears in them; and how can it be otherwise? This it is that occupies me, that sets me in motion, and makes me sensible that I am still too much alive.

Corbinelli has been quite kneaded into mysticism for more than a year; I am in the secret; all the outworks of the place are so invested, that he can endure no other reading. He has got a Malaval* that delights him; he has found out that my grandmother, and the love of God of my *grandfather* St. Francis de Sales, were as spiritual as St. Theresa. He has extracted from all these books five hundred beautiful maxims; he every day visits madame le Maigre, a very pretty woman; nothing is spoken of but God, Christian morality, the Evangelist of the day; these are called holy conversations, they charm him, and he shines in them; he is insensible to every thing else. He, however, answers M. de Soissons† a little in behalf of M. Descartes: he shows all he does to madame de Coulanges, who is very much pleased with it: several Cartesians desire him to continue, but he will not: you know him well; he burns every thing he has scribbled; always full of others and destitute of himself, his self-love is akin to their pride,

* Francis Malaval, author of several works added to the *Index* at Rome, as suspected of being too spiritually refined. The article Malaval in Moreri's Historical Dictionary, is a very curious one. Who would believe that a man blind from the age of nine months, should attain to much erudition and knowledge as is ascribed to him?

† Peter-Daniel Huet, bishop of Soissons, and afterwards of Avranches, wrote against the philosophy of Descartes.

and he gives no offence; I am not surprised that the lieutenant of police is pleased with him. I know not whether he had a hand in that marriage *, but it is broken off; the mother is inconsolable: the father does not care about it, he says, and the daughter shows great indifference on this unpleasant occasion. Corbinelli does not write to me, he has no time; I know not what I would not give to see the body of the place as well taken as the outworks, and to see how real devotion would operate upon so lively and extensive an understanding; if I were worthy of asking such a favour of God, I would do it with all my heart.

You talk to me of M. de Beauvilliers, and M. de Fenelon, and of the propriety of the choice that has been made of them. As I have already told you, they are both excellent. I congratulate the chevalier most sincerely upon the occasion; M. de Beauvilliers is very worthy of being his friend.

I informed you of the negociations that were carrying on for the return of the parliament. My son has taken a trip to Rennes, to visit M. de Pommereuil's son, who is arrived from Alençon, of which place he is intendant; his lovely wife is with him: she would set all Rennes on fire, if she were to remain here four days. Our ladies are still here three days after the departure of the faithless and perfidious M. de Revel; this was an event that gave no pleasure, though they pretend not to care about it. The weather to-day is dreadful; it seems as if winter were already disposed to take place. I think, by way of drying myself, of your fine sunshine at Avignon. Ah, good heavens! tell it not in Gath; it is the duke that will deprive you of this beautiful

* The marriage of madame le Camus with M. de Soissons, which did not take place. In 1690 she married M. de Nicolai, first president of the chamber of accounts at Paris.

county, he deserves to be scolded; I dare not think of the revenue you derived from it, nor what you will do without this resource. Be careful of yourself, my dear child; let me hope to see you again in good health; mine continues excellent. My daughter-in-law desires to be remembered to you affectionately; we have been alone, we have taken courage, and we are now very well able to bear my son's absence.

LETTER DCCCCXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 14, 1689.

I AM always unhappy when any of your letters miscarry; it makes me lose the thread of a conversation that was perfectly connected, and which constitutes my happiness and my amusement. When we belong to a society, as I do to that of Grignan, are interested in it, and attentive to it, the loss of a letter is not a trifle; but what is to be done in this case? arm ourselves with patience, endure these lesser evils that are attached to greater, and endeavour, if it pleases God, to see one another again, and not adopt such violent measures as little Rochebonne*; "we must separate, and never love again:" this is a violent little fellow, who can bear nothing. For my part, I shall say, "we must always love one another, though we should be obliged to separate:" I like the idea you have given me of that dear child.

But let us talk of our good duke de Chaulnes. So then he has called at Grignan. Your chateau has an air of such grandeur; it is so well furnished, your chapter

* M. de Chateauneuf de Rochebonne, nephew of M. de Grignan, killed September 11, 1709, at the battle of Malplaquet.

is so noble, your terraces so proud and so superior to all others, that the duke will easily comprehend that Boreas is not always in a humour to suffer these heights, which seem to brave and defy him. You must inform me of what passed at this visit; I am persuaded that you must have had Coulanges and the truant Capuchin* with you. I wish the latter could cure the colic. How, my child, is this? M. de Grignan, who never was afflicted with this complaint, to be thus disordered by it! but we have no choice, and we must submit. God has not yet pointed out to me the path of my decay; I expect it with a resignation that will make me endure it patiently, for the one seldom comes without the other. I am sure you have received the duke in the most courteous and hospitable manner, notwithstanding the ill office he is going to render you. I dare say he did not amuse himself with answering *my genius*, as he conferred with yours in Lower Britany; he must have had too much pleasure in conversing with you personally, and too much business; this, in my opinion, is the most desirable part of his embassy. You must have mentioned your poor mamma, and he must have explained to you what he has done for our deputation; you will be astonished that we know nothing respecting it; after what he said to M. de Lavardin to desire him to give the deputation to M. de Sévigné, a silence has taken place, which I cannot comprehend. But as it is the duke's business to name the deputy, I have no reason to doubt his good-will hitherto, and still less the friendly zeal of madame de Chaulnes; on the contrary, I have reason to be convinced of it. The parliament is sent

* The physician M. de Chaulnes took with him, and one of the two capuchins of the Louvre whom madame de Sévigné often mentions in her letters.

back to Rennes*; this gives incredible joy; the city furnishes the king with 50,000 livres. M. de Coëtlogon† has been canvassing in this affair, and I am persuaded that it is he who has thrown the stumbling-blocks in our way through M. de Cavoie: I have nothing to say, and therefore say nothing, except that we are unfortunate, owing to the death of a pope, at a stated period; the complaints of marshal d'Estrées, which prevented M. de Lavardin from holding the states, as he would otherwise have done; the return of the parliament at this juncture, and a present of 50,000 livres: this succession and concatenation of unforeseen events, have produced what you view in the same light that I do. But, my dear child, be not more grieved than we are: we have still some fortitude left, these things do not affect the heart. Marshal d'Estrées refers me to madame de la Fayette, to learn his sentiments; we shall at length know the sequel, and the curious unravelling of this intrigue. My son will console himself with the resolution he has taken of excusing himself from the *arrière-ban*, which he was obliged to accept, by proving the expense he incurred at the head of the nobility. I have already gone too far; I cannot help wondering at the swiftness of my pen, which goes farther than I intend it should.

According to the idea I have formed to myself of Paulina's person and understanding, I think she must be very striking and interesting, and a thousand times more so than beauties who have not these attractions. I

* The parliament of Rennes had been moved to Vannes in 1675, on account of a sedition that happened that year at Rennes.

† René Hyacinth, marquis de Coëtlogon, was governor of Rennes, and brother-in-law of Louis d'Oger, marquis de Cavoie, grand marshal of the king's household.

also imagine that the duke considered her as she is, and you, my child, as you are; I am not uneasy about your beauty, while you preserve your health. I have told madame de la Fayette that her son should shudder at marrying mademoiselle de Marillac, with whom our marquis was in love: this marriage is highly approved, it is a good family, the alliance is desirable, and all the Lamoignons have 200,000 livres for ever. Madame de la Fayette insures them all her property, reserving only the use and profits; is not this enough? she is very well satisfied; the marriage will not take place till the end of the campaign.

M. d'Arles has written me a very loving letter; he is pleased with Forges; he informs me that madame de Vins has gained her cause, and I have written to him to congratulate her upon the occasion. My son sends his kindest remembrances to you, and desires me to tell you what I have already told you; he saw M. de Pommereuil's beautiful daughter-in-law at Rennes; she stammers so much as to be unable to utter a sentence distinctly; but we must say with Moliere, "Where is the foolish husband who would be sorry that his wife were dumb*?" In good truth, I neither stammer nor am dumb; this is a misfortune for you. I must tell you once more, that I am sorry your farmers begin to pay as badly as ours do; this, joined to the loss of Avignon,——*But let us not talk of this*, nor of the ravages committed by time upon our poor persons, and at length upon our lives. I ought to conclude in a less gloomy strain, but I know not what to say; *dixi*.

* See Act II. Scene IV. of the Médecin malgré Lui.

LETTER DCCCCXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 18, 1689.

Your letter of the first of September is at length arrived, after having travelled to Rennes; this is a journey my letters sometimes take, by being put into the wrong bag: how is this to be redressed? but here it is; I should have been very sorry to have lost it; it carries on a chain of conversation, which informs me of every thing that had escaped me. Let us pass over the account of the good duke de Chaulnes's visit; of the magnificent and friendly reception you gave him; the elegance of your house; excellent fare; two tables, like his in Britany, sumptuously served; a noble company, without the presence of Boreas; he would have stunned you, you would not have been able to hear each other speak, and besides you had guests enough without him. Flame seems to know his business well; no confusion, and great taste: I figure all this to myself, with greater pleasure than I can possibly express to you. I wished you to be seen in all your glory, at least your country glory, for that of Aix is still greater; and that M. de Chaulnes should find something better to eat than our chicken and bacon. He now knows what you can do; you have shown enough to do as you please at Paris; he has seen your fish and flesh repasts, the mutton-pasty, and the pigeon-pie. Coulanges played his part also very well, his spirits are not yet lowered. I dread this change in him; for gaiety constitutes a great part of his merit. I have no doubt that his heart overflowed with joy at so handsome a reception, and that he was in raptures at Paulina's perfections. You always accuse her of not

being agreeable, except with dukes and peers: I have, however, seen her very entertaining only with us; and you gave me an account, when I was here five years ago, of some very amusing suppers. M. de Chaulnes has written to me; enclosed is his letter: you will see whether he is satisfied with you all, and the manner in which you do the honours of your house. He made you laugh at the *Genius;* mine did not make its appearance at Grignan, better company was to be found: you knew nearly what it would have said, and you have done too much honour to my memory; you have mentioned me several times, and drank my health. Coulanges climbed upon his chair; this, I think, was a dangerous attempt for a little man, as round as a bowl, and not very alert. I am glad he did not meet with a fall in solemnizing my health, and am very anxious for a letter from him. The dinner, which you ordered to rise at La Flame's wand, in *Noah's ark*, which you describe so pleasantly, must have been both elegant and enchanting. The music was quite new; it must have brought to mind the menagerie at Versailles. In short, you are very generous, as you say, to give such a reception to an ambassador who is going to do you so much harm; I am convinced that he is very sorry for it. Madame de Chaulnes tells me that it is thought many difficulties will be started in the conclave, and afterwards upon the cruel affair of the franchises; so much the better, say I:

*Rome sera, du moins, un peu plus tard rendue**.

That county, that charming Avignon, will remain to us, whilst the Holy Ghost is choosing a pope, and the negociations continue. You are right, my child; it is like the day you were at the ball at the Louvre, bril-

* Rome will, at least, be surrendered somewhat later.

liant with jewels which you were to return the next day: but what you retained was better; and you were handsomer on the next day, than from all appearances your income will be. I say on this subject, as you do, in your funeral orations, "Tell it not in Gath." Indeed, there was no appearance of it at Grignan, when you received his excellency: I know not how you contrive it, or how people can run without legs; it is a miracle, which I pray God may always continue. The duchess de Chaulnes sent me the letter you wrote to her; no one can say what is necessary, and no more, so well as you; every thought seems placed in its proper niche. In short, what shall I say to you? I share in all you do; self-love, friendship, and gratitude, all are satisfied. I suppose that your brothers did not set out till they had assisted you in doing the honours of your house. I shall say nothing to you respecting the deputation; every thing relating to it, has been too slow and too long in hand; we will talk of it another time.

Your dear son is well; you know that he was every where, sword in hand, with M. Boufflers: this little monkey, my dear child! *God preserve him,* I shall never alter my prayer. Mentz has surrendered *: this news

* Mentz surrendered at the end of seven weeks, for want of powder. M. d'Haxelles had made twenty-two sallies, in which he had killed five thousand of the enemy's men. But his noble defence was very unfavourably judged at Paris; "this immense city," said Voltaire, "full of indolent people, who must judge of every thing, and who have ears and tongues, but no eyes." M. d'Haxelles was hooted at there in a crowded theatre. But Lewis XIV. received him well; it is affirmed that he said to him, "You defended yourself like a man of courage, and surrendered like a man of sense." What in some degree excused the injustice of the public, was, that this officer was the devoted creature of Louvois; and as he surrendered Mentz at the moment it was going to be reinforced, he was suspected of having done so, to favour the minister; for the latter, daily perceiving the king's aversion to him, feared, it is

has surprised us; we were so easy respecting this siege, that I always laughed at M. de Lorraine. It is said that the marquis d'Huxelles has retired with the esteem of friends and foes. I tremble lest the dean's brother should be among the number of killed or wounded; none of his brave brothers will attain grey hairs: of this he is convinced at least, if we may judge by the hasty careless manner in which he listened to M. Prat; he is accustomed to such news. I am in pain for poor Martillac: what can be done with one leg, in a city taken by assault*? what noise, what confusion, what an infernal region! I am very uneasy. I pity M. de la Trousse; we said truly, in seeing him repair his house: "The worst that can happen to him, is to enjoy the expense he is incurring there:" this was indeed too true.

Do you wish to know what sort of life we lead, my dear child? I will describe it to you. We rise at eight; go to mass at nine; walk or not, according to the weather, sometimes different ways; we dine comfortably; a neighbour arrives, we talk of the news; after dinner we work, my daughter-in-law upon a hundred different things, I upon two pieces of tapestry which madame de Carman gave me at Chaulnes; at five we separate, and walk alone or together; meet at a very pretty spot; I either take a book, pray, or think of my dear child, build castles in the air, and am sometimes cheerful, and sometimes melancholy. My son reads entertaining and good books; we have some devotional, and some historical; this amuses and employs us, we make our remarks upon what we read; my son is indefatigable, he would

said, every decisive event, which, by effecting a peace, would have rendered him less necessary.

* Madame de Sévigné was not ignorant that Mentz had capitulated; but she meant to speak of the attack of the covered way, which was very vigorous and bloody.

read for five hours successively if we would permit him. We receive letters and answer them, which occupies no small portion of our time, at least of mine. We have had company, and we shall have more, though we do not wish it; when visitors arrive, we make ourselves perfectly easy. My son has workmen who are dressing trees as they say here, and gravelling the parterre. In short, my child, it is a strange thing, that in pursuing this insipid, and in some degree, melancholy life, the days should glide and fly from us; God knows what is flying from us at the same time; but *tell it not in Gath*; I cannot, however, help thinking of it. We sup at eight; Sévigné reads after supper, but only books of amusement, for fear of falling asleep; they retire at ten, but I seldom go to bed till twelve; such nearly are the rules of our convent; over the door is inscribed, *Sacred liberty*, or, *Do as you please* *. I infinitely prefer this life to that at Rennes; it will be sufficient to pass Lent there, for the benefit of soul and body.

Du Plessis has written me word, that his whim has only yet displayed the end of its nose; that it is not fully come forth; but that he is married to a person perfectly suited to his taste, of sense and beauty, of a good family, and who has secured him from all future want; this is what you make me doubt: he seems still, however, to listen to madame de Vins. In short, these are his words, "I love this wife a great deal better than the last;" this agrees with the grief he displayed at her loss: have you forgotten it?

* This is what Rabelais says of the abbey de Thélème. They had this single rule: Fais ce que tu voudras,—Do as you please.

LETTER DCCCCXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 21, 1689.

Not only do I read your letters with pleasure, but I read them over again with an affection that interests me, and gives a relish to my solitary walks; these letters have greater charms, and are better written, than you imagine; you are not aware of the turn and harmony you give to them. I must tell you, my dear countess, that M. de Chaulnes, after so many professions of friendship, has forgotten us a little at Paris. He received your letter at Versailles; it was calculated to rouse him; nevertheless, in a week's residence there, and three conferences with the king, he could not find one moment to say a word in favour of my son, not even to M. de Croissi; he was contented with saying to M. de Lavardin, who was to have held the states; "Sir, I entreat you to appoint M. de Sévigné deputy." And the next day, upon marshal d'Estrées's remonstrances, an alteration took place; so that these words were lost in air. Madame de Chaulnes is to speak about it to M. de Croissi, but it will certainly be too late; they are people who are not dormant, and this is our situation. If the business depended upon marshal d'Estrées, it would be very certain: madame de la Fayette has written him two very forcible letters; he only requires at this moment of interregnum, to discover what would be agreeable at court, and he himself points out the way to madame de la Fayette, who on her part impels the duchess, and places the abbé Têtu between her and M. de Croissi: she certainly does wonders, and we wait the effect of her exertions with tolerable tranquillity, with regard to the

object itself, but hurt at the coldness and silence of the duke, whose friendship for me and my son, whose views, advice, manners, all convinced us, and the whole province, that he considered us with peculiar distinction. This, between you and me, so greatly afflicts and surprises us, that comparing what has passed since their departure, with what passed before, we lose our senses, and can in no way account for this sad difference; we think it all a dream, one of those disagreeable dreams from which we are delighted to awake, and to discover that it was an illusion. We will inform you of the sequel; but be assured that we are highly pleased with the marshal: he has even written to us, without saying so much to madame de la Fayette, in the most obliging manner possible. As to M. de Lavardin, it must be owned that the holding the states would have been a very pretty appointment for him; but this was taking the finest feather out of the marshal's cap: his majesty may compensate M. de Lavardin when he pleases.

What say you to Mentz? The marquis d'Huxelles was in want of powder and muskets; it seemed to us likewise that they were somewhat tardy in sending reinforcements: in short, it was the will of God, as it is that your son should be in perfect health. The dear marquis has written me a very pretty letter; he rallies with me, and calls my daughter-in-law *his cousin*; he says they have done nothing yet, but highly praises M. de Boufflers; in short, no one can answer better to the fire of courage and valour than he does. *God preserve him.* Coulanges appears to me delighted with your magnificence, your entertainments, your good taste, and with Pauline: you are wicked, you think he is compelled by virtue of witchcraft; I believe him; but without being [illegible], you display more splendour than is necessary to

enchant him. Your company was select, and your court perfectly genteel; nothing could add to the grandeur of this reception.

M. Rousseau is mad with his madame de la Riviere, whom he makes a constellation; it is one of their dreams ordinary and extraordinary, to which they give so much credit, that they have been almost bewildered by them; for they took all the phantoms of their imagination for serious truths. But I am not dreaming when I tell you, that one of my letters is either lost or missent. I did not wait from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth to write to my dear child; I wrote to you from hence, where I arrived with madame de Chaulnes and M. de Revel: she set out on Saturday the twentieth, at four in the morning, and I wrote to you the next day, August the twenty-first. It is only to scold the postman, that I am so exact; I do not, however, complain, as I receive your letters very regularly. You praise Revel for the same reason I did, in saying that I had found him a man of veracity, and so little tinctured with vanity, that after having related to me the passages of the Rhine and Senef, and other circumstances of his campaigns, I did not know whether he deserved praise or censure. He told us that at first he fell into the Rhine, and was dragged out by his hair; that his horse sunk into a hole; in short, he related all this in such a manner, that I concluded he was drowned; it seems, however, that he mounted very expeditiously, though dripping wet, upon another horse, and went very prettily to charge the enemy, and disengage the prince, who had just been wounded*. I was, nevertheless, in great want of this decision from the higher council, which the chevalier sends me, for his is really so to me. I am

* The count de Revel commanded the cuirassiers at the passage of the Rhine, June 12, 1672.

obliged to say, to complete Revel's panegyric, that he did not speak so carelessly of the battle of Altenheim †, and of the reputation of the chevalier.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I HAD, however, assured my mother, that no one could be more esteemed for valour and even probity than Revel; but this was only a trifling sentence, from an inferior judge, in comparison of the decision of council, which has just been delivered by the knight of glory. Now we are upon the subject of Revel, I will give you a little anecdote, which will appear *fuor di proposito* (inapplicable). I once saw La R**** ‡ at madame de Louvois's playing at basset; she lost considerably; at length, piqued at her ill luck, she made an alpion §, saying these beautiful words, "If I lose this alpion, I will say the most disgraceful thing of myself that can possibly be uttered." She lost it, and to keep her word, she told the company that she had that very morning taken a clyster that had been brought her the preceding evening, from pure avarice, not being willing to incur an unnecessary expense. This is the anecdote: now, my dear little sister, for the application. I am piqued at having lost the deputation, which I was led to expect, whether I would or not; and, in revenge, I

† The chevalier de Grignan had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Altenheim, which happened August 2, 1675.

‡ The same mentioned by M. de Revel, in the Letter of the 24th August. Those who wish to know who is meant by this initial, may choose between madame de Rambures and madame de Royan, two persons of such distinguished rank, and such ill manners, that we risk little in giving them credit for every thing of this kind we may think proper.

§ A term at the game of basset, synonymous to that of paroli at pharo.

am going to tell you a disgraceful thing of myself, more so than La R****'s. It is this; notwithstanding all my fine reflections, and the philosophy which solitude and retirement inspire, I have found myself so much nettled at M. de Chaulnes's neglect and indolence, at the disgust this creates in the province, and the joy with which it has inspired M. de Chaulnes's enemies, and those who hate me on his account, that it is with the greatest difficulty in the world, I have got the better of it. I have therefore carefully avoided every thing that could recall my thoughts to it; and as your letters were filled with the most friendly sentiments towards me, and the interest you took in this little distinction, I would rather have suffered death than have read them; they were poison to my mind. Can I, my dear little sister, give you a greater proof of confidence, than in relating to you such a feeling, after six years of reflection, and good sense? But tell me, at the same time, if there can be a comparison between the friendship and zeal, evinced by M. de Chaulnes for two years, to do us this service, and the uncommon lethargy he displays at present, and the profound silence he observes, after so many solemn asseverations, that the only pleasure he had in leaving Britany, was in going to put the finishing stroke to this affair. How could he approach you after this? how could he write to my mother? how, in short, can he justify himself for having failed in one of the most essential duties of friendship? Could it ever have been supposed that M. and madame de Chaulnes would have become useless to us with regard to the deputation of Britany; and that madame de la Fayette and marshal d'Estrées should be the only persons that would have procured it for us, had measures been taken in time? I begin to give up all thoughts of it; and now that all

hope is at an end, I find myself like the man of Dijon, whose story M. de Ormesson has often related to us: he was upon the wheel; he said to his confessor; "Sir, my mind has not been so composed for a long time." It is certain that I am much more tranquil than I was a month ago, when I expected letters from M. de Chaulnes by every post; my mother will acquaint you with my sentiments upon this subject. I am persuaded that it is love who has played us this trick; and this is the only apology that can be offered for such conduct, for who does not know that every thing should yield to the power of love? It is only to be lamented that we may attribute it to that little fretful sneerer, du Bois de la Roche. I already know where in future to meet with more consolation than at the Rocks; I mean with you and M. de Grignan in your magnificent château: if God preserve the health of all the Grignans, and if nothing change upon this score either, in my own house or madame de Mauron's, I can foresee nothing to prevent my visiting you at Grignan, under pretence of going to take the waters; but, in fact, to avoid the arriere-ban, from which I could not excuse myself this year, on account of the way in which it was offered to me, and because M. de Chaulnes advised me to accept of it, in the views he assured me he had for me. In all human probability therefore, it will be towards the spring, or rather towards the summer, when I shall see you, my dearest sister. My only fear is, that M. de Grignan may at that time be obliged to visit the coast, and that I shall not have so much of his company as I wish. I am delighted that Paulina begins to make conquests; little Coulanges seems to praise her most heartily and sincerely. Your son tells me very prettily, that after having been at the taking of three or four cities, he has a great inclination

to expose himself to the air of the Rocks. Adieu, my lovely little sister; I salute and embrace all the illustrious Grignans, without forgetting M. de la Garde.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ CONTINUES.

All this must have vent: it is a relief to him. You may well suppose that if I see him set out for Bourbon and Grignan, I shall request a place in his carriage. It will be found, in the end, that I, who do not keep a philosopher's shop, have more philosophy than all of them. Providence assists me wonderfully upon these occasions; it was by submitting to its decrees, that mademoiselle le Camus heroically endured the breaking off of her marriage; I am inclined to think, that the cardinal (Le Camus*) did not bear the shock with so much fortitude. I fancy his eminence seeks only the road to paradise, and that he will not desert the *Christian mob*. I cannot believe that people of really good sense can carry on the farce long; it is assuming too much. I feel the mortification of this family. It is still believed that the affair of the parliament of Rennes is determined.

LETTER DCCCCXXX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, September 25, 1689.

I reconcile myself very badly to the restraint laid upon me by M. de Grignan; he keeps a constant watch over my actions; he is afraid I shall give him a father-in-law: this captivity will drive me to some rash adven-

* A prelate who piqued himself so much upon his high birth, that preaching one day to the people of his diocese, he styled them the *Christian mob*.

ture, but it will not be with *monsieur* le comte de Revel? yes, *monsieur*, for he is not only *monsieur*, but *monsieur le comte* de Revel; we are quite unacquainted here with the custom of giving a title to a person who has no right to it†; we nevertheless sometimes forget ourselves, and call him *Revel*, but this is under the rose. I will not marry him, so make yourself easy, he is too gallant; this will excite your curiosity to know who are his *Chimenas:* you mention two who are true Bretonnes, but there are three others; a young *sénéchale* who was here, but not related to the one you have seen; mademoiselle de K****, who is very pretty, and who was at Rennes; and to crown all, a little madame de M. C. *your niece*, for she is grand-daughter to *your father* Descartes; she has a great deal of wit, and seems to think that fire is hot, and that she may burn and be burned. All this, however, is carried on with so much decency, that their common lover seems heartily tired of Rennes; he told M. de Louvois the other day, that if he wanted the most steady officer in the world for a winter campaign, he would think of him.

Let us now, my child, talk of the chevalier's prejudice; does friendship blind us so far? I think I am as well acquainted with it as any one, but it should seem to me that it would never err against conviction; we do not love those less who are in the wrong, but we perceive their error. What! shall an unknown personage, called Reason, supported by Truth, knock at the door, and shall she be driven away, as from the university of Paris (you have seen that charming work of Despreaux‡),

† M. de Coulanges said that the children of the members of the parliament of Rennes were all born marquises and counts.

‡ See the burlesque decision given in the high chamber of Parnassus, in favor of the masters of arts, for the support of the doctrine of Aristotle.

without being heard, though accompanied by justification? What! do two and two no longer make four? A gratification given by marshal de Meillaraie, of a hundred crowns every two years, which was never a settled pension, and which was not known, cannot be discontinued without a crime; for they say, "Sir, we must see at the next meeting of the states; if I am deceived, it will be easily rectified." For, with regard to the late gratification erased and given to the states of seventy-one, Coëtlogon does not disagree to it. Is it possible to be in the wrong, when all these things are so clearly proved? If the chevalier had so good a cause in hand, with that warm blood that creates heroes and the gout, he would know how to support it better than I do. But can a person with so much good sense, shut his eyes and his judgement to this poor truth? No, surely, my dear countess, no surely; the duke de Chaulnes was not to blame here; this is his master-piece of friendship; here he fulfilled all its duties, and even surpassed them; it is with regard to us that he was to blame, and his conduct is wholly incomprehensible: such is the miserable state of man; every thing is cut diamond-wise, every thing is true, and this is the world. The good duke has written to me again from Toulon; he is constantly thinking of me, without having once thought of me for a single moment during a week's stay at Paris: not one word to the king respecting the deputation so often promised, in a manner which gave us reason to think he would make it his own business; not a word to M. de Croissi, whose son he took with him, and who would have appointed your brother; he said a flying word to M. de Lavardin, but could he suppose that he had more power than himself to create a deputy? We had persuaded ourselves that this was after he had men-

tioned it to the king. At length he sets out, he learns that Lavardin is not to hold the states, it was therefore necessary to write. He goes to Grignan, you talk to him on the subject, he seems to be inclined to write, and this is all; he writes to me from Grignan and Toulon, but says not a syllable respecting it. Madame de Chaulnes is to speak to M. de Croissi about it, but it will be too late, the place will be taken by M. de Coëtlogon. As to marshal d'Estrées, he has joyfully engaged himself to madame de la Fayette, provided the court leaves him master of the nomination: we were but too happy on this quarter; but we think no more of it: M. de Cavoie will have the deputation for his brother-in-law, and will be in the right. The good duchess has lost too much time; she is timid, and will find the passage blocked up; it is not every one who knows how to speak. I know not how to reconcile this lethargic conduct with a friendship I cannot doubt; I am as much at a loss to comprehend it as my son; but we are resolved to have the glory of not complaining; this would give the duke's enemies too much pleasure, and serve them for a triumph. We are enclosed in these woods, and it is easy for us to be silent; changes may take place in another year, so that we are very well pleased you gave him such a magnificent reception: we shall not discontinue our correspondence with him; I shall only state the fact, and ask *his excellency* how he could constantly think of us, and yet forget both us and himself? We shall not go to the meeting of the states, and shall laugh at the arriere-ban, which has given us nothing but uneasiness. These are our wise resolutions; if you approve them, we shall think them still better. We are, however, sensible to the loss you will sustain in your charming county; we cannot too much regret so many fine

and good things which flowed from it. I feel this blow as much as you, and perhaps more; for you are sublime, and I am not so.

A propos of sublime: it seems to me that M. de Marillac* does not act amiss. La Fayette is handsome, and has no bad qualities: he has a good name, he is in the path of glory, and has all his mother's friends, who are infinite in number; his mother is a woman of distinguished merit; she entails all her estate upon him, as does also the abbé †. He will some day be in possession of 30,000 livres a year: he does not owe a single pistole; these are not mere words of course. Whom can you find preferable to him, when law is out of the question? The lady has 200,000 livres; could madame de la Fayette expect less? Give me your opinion, for I tell you nothing but the truth. M. de Lamoignon is the depository of the articles, which were signed four days ago, between M. de Lamoignon, the lieutenant of police, and madame de Lavardin, who made the match.

But what say you to all these changes in the magistracy? I am quite grieved that our M. de Lamoignon should not have been one of the number; both he and his friends are hurt at it. Your M. de Torci ‡ was certainly born with a caul on his head: ah, would you had made him write with good ink! But it was not decreed that we should profit by the ardour of his friendship; it

* René de Marillac, dean of the counsellors of state, married Maria-Magdalen de Marillac, his daughter, to René-Armand Motier, count de la Fayette, younger son of Magdelan Pioche de la Vergne countess de la Fayette, and colonel of the regiment de la Fere.

† Louis Motier, abbé de la Fayette, eldest son of madame de la Fayette.

‡ John Baptist Colbert, marquis de Torci, appointed secretary of [illegible] upon the death of Charles Colbert, marquis de Torci, his father.

was not the will of God, this is evident, and we think no more of it. M. de Pontchartrain is appointed controller-general; I expected this, but not so soon; we are going to write to him: you will not fail to do the same, as well as to madame de Moucy; she is now sister to the first president *, but she will not be vain of the distinction.

How happy Paulina is, to be with you! you will new-model her; it is a good sign when she approves the praises you bestow on madame de Dangeau. This dear child is capable and deserving of all that you can teach her; I have always thought so since you told me she had sense, and was desirous of pleasing you. Once more I say, how happy she is, to be with you, and to see and hear you! Coulanges seems delighted with her, as well as with you and M. de Grignan, your château and your splendour: your manner of doing the honours of the house seems to have made a very deep impression upon his brain; he will, at least, acknowledge you for the duke and duchess of the *campo basso* †. In short, my dear countess, what can you not do when you please? and with what an air, and what a grace! My son has read what you have written him with pleasure; he has lately communicated his thoughts to you; he desires you will be convinced that I am in perfect health, and that the air of the Rocks is excellent. M. d'Aix has scarcely acted civilly in not paying you a visit; what folly, to wish to be first president ‡! But the truth is, he is mad; luckily those on whom it depends, are not so: if, notwithstanding your endeavours to live upon good terms with him, his conduct should give you offence, I advise you to write to madame de la Fayette;

* Achilles de Harlai. † The lower camp.
‡ Of the Parliament of Aix.

she is not convinced that he can be in the right when he opposes you, and there are few things he dreads more than to appear ridiculous in her eyes. I am aware of the contempt in which your parliament is held, in leaving them such a leader as we are acquainted with: attend a little to what has been the fate of those to whom that province has been given, M. d'Argouges, Pontchartrain, Boucherat; these are men, and not *sea-horses* who neigh and commit a thousand extravagances. I shall also mention La Faluère, with whom every body is satisfied. Adieu, my child, I embrace you with infinite affection.

LETTER DCCCCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, September 28, 1689.

You astonish me by the account you give me of the illness of M. de la Trousse. I was informed that a kind of palsy had seized him from the hips downwards; this is a shocking circumstance, and deprives him of the power of enjoying society, and consequently of receiving consolation. I do not comprehend how this malady can be cured by the waters of Bourbon; how can it be supposed that waters which are only cathartic should be fit to restore strength and vigour to relaxed and insensible parts? In short, my child, this is a most extraordinary illness; I pity M. de la Trousse, more than he would pity me. I hope that the chevalier will find as much benefit from the waters as he is led to expect. They must surely have great efficacy, or people would not repair from one end of the world to the other, to bathe an hour and a half in three days, the only way in which they are used, for they are not

drunk. Let me know their effect, and particularly whether the chevalier has been relieved by them. This journey cannot be long, if they only bathe three days; if, after this, the chevalier should be able to serve, you would all have great reason to wish the campaign in Dauphiny fell to his lot, as your fine château would then be his retreat and resting-place. Enclosed is a letter from Coulanges; you will find that he is still full of your magnificent reception and of Paulina.

Madame de Chaulnes informs me that she has spoken to M. de Croissi, who will do his best, and that a letter shall be sent from the duke de Chaulnes to M. de Pommereuil; all this hangs together so badly, that I have no further hopes of it. M. de Pommereuil and marshal d'Estrées are entirely devoted to us; the last wishes only for a hint to name my son: this is what M. de Chaulnes should do, or madame de Chaulnes after her husband's departure; this is what he should have written after he had learned at Lyons that M. de Lavardin was not to hold the states. In short, I shall never comprehend this lethargy, after their long-continued friendship, having said to us a hundred times, "This is more our business than yours." I can only conjecture that they did not choose to oppose M. de la Coëtlogon, to whose assiduity the return of the parliament is attributed, and the present given by the city of Rennes; though in fact he had nothing to do with it, for it was voluntary: but as he is governor of Rennes, he puts on an air of importunity, and they were a good deal embarrassed in acquainting me with this disagreeable circumstance. But why then did they recommend my son to M. de Lavardin? this is what puzzles me: but I will perplex myself no more with it, though I cannot, however, believe that they have no longer any regard for me; it must be ascribed to timidity, rather than

indifference, and I find that this good duchess is overwhelmed with remorse. Did I not inform you that her husband wrote to me from Toulon? I shall answer him at Rome, when I shall be more certain of what I have to tell him: but I will not complain; this would be acting an ill part: every thing is confounded and concealed in the journey to Rome; we have suffered no humiliation of any kind, with regard to the public; and my heart justifies them, not doubting that they love us better than M. de Coëtlogon.

There is an abbé of Francheville here, who has a great deal of wit, and is agreeable, unaffected, and learned without ostentation; Montreuil is acquainted with him. He has passed his life at Paris, has seen you twice, and you have made an impression on his brain like a divinity. He is a great Cartesian, and is mademoiselle Descartes's tutor; she showed him your letter; he admired that, and your enlightened understanding. His wit pleases and amuses me infinitely; it is a long time since I have been in such good company. He calls my son *nate deâ*, and he thinks me also a divinity, not of *la plebe degli Dei**; for my part, I consider myself only as a sylvan divinity: but to satisfy M. de Grignan, who may be apprehensive that I shall marry him, I have to inform him that another widow, young, rich, and of a good family, struck with his wit and merit, has been married to him for these two years, after having refused presidents à mortier: what more need be said? and he, sought after by this widow whom he ought himself to have sought after, yielded, at length, at the age of sixty, quitted his abbey, to have no other employment than that of a Christian and Cartesian philosopher,

* The plebeian gods: a quotation from Tasso's Aminta. The words *nate deâ* are from Virgil's Eneid.

and of being the wisest man in this province. He is always at home, and his wife, who is a young and elegant woman, is never happy but when she is with him. He has visited my son and me, and, if we are pleased with his conversation, he seems delighted with ours. You would certainly like this man: his name is M. de Guébriac; he came fourteen leagues to see us, and the idea he has of you gives me great pleasure. I should not be satisfied with any merit that was ignorant of yours.

My dear Paulina, I was charmed to see your writing once more; I was fearful you would have forgotten me in your prosperity; it is so great a one for you to be on good terms with your dear mamma, and to be worthy of her esteem, that a little head like yours might easily be turned by it. I advise you to continue the exercise of all your little perfections, which will secure your mamma's love for you, and at the same time the esteem of all the world.—I am, indeed, very glad, my dear child, that for your amusement, and the honour of my prophecy, Paulina is become amiable and gentle, as you wished her to be.

I cannot comprehend why an alliance with mademoiselle de Camus should be less desirable, than if her uncle had gone to Rome; what a jest! Was she considered as the niece of a minister of state? He was nothing more than a cardinal of great merit, and a pious man: he is so still.

LETTER DCCCCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 2, 1689.

It will be a year to-morrow since I saw you, embraced you, heard you speak, and left you at Charenton. Good heavens, what a lively remembrance I have of that day; and how I long for another, that may be distinguished by seeing you again, embracing you, and clinging to you for ever! Why cannot I thus end my life with the person who has wholly occupied it? This is what I feel, and what I tell you, my dear child, without intending it, to commemorate the end of this year of separation.

After this, I must tell you, that your last letter is so gay, so sprightly, has so much of the *currente calamo* in it, that it charms me, because it is impossible to think and write so pleasantly, without being in good spirits and in good health. Let us first talk of the chevalier; I think his situation must be much improved since I saw him. What! I might see him stamp with his right foot! As to the left, it still kept the field with glory, though it was sometimes humbled by the state of its colleague, which mortified us equally. In truth, nothing but a miracle could have restored him the use of his right foot; for he was almost as lame as M. de la Rochefoucault, which was quite deplorable; and this change is effected by three quarters of an hour's bathing for three successive days, in these salutary waters: neither Mont-d'or nor Barege could have done as much. In three days, then, we are free. Assure the chevalier of the sincere joy I feel, from the relief he has derived from these charming waters, till we can pronounce the word *cured*. You pay a high compli-

ment to M. de Carcassonne's solicitude, in comparing it with yours for me; I can easily conceive that none can be more affectionate or consolatory. The chevalier, then, thinks madame de Ganges * greatly altered; this is odd; she was really much to blame, not to answer to the idea he had formed of her: I have sometimes seen a likeness to that beautiful model, but a hundred thousand degrees below it; for besides her features, so many things are wanting, with respect to manner, grace, and what constitutes beauty, that the resemblance dwindles to nothing. If I had known she had been the wife of my Ganges, whom I have so often seen, I should have viewed her, perhaps, through a different medium; but the deed is done.

Let us talk of madame de Montbrun; good heavens, with what spirit do you paint this woman! Your brother is delighted with the portrait, but he will not tell you so, he only embraces you. He is with his honest friend; and it is I who have to thank you for having left every thing, and flown with such impetuosity to describe this woman, who is really an original: full of her noble ancestry, which she traces as far back as the Flood, and which occupies her mind entirely; all her Guelph and Gibelin relations, friends and enemies, with whom you fill your page inimitably, with the greatest humour and drollery; her reveries, in calling the marquis d'Huxelles her enemies, when she certainly means the Germans; the crowns with which she decorates and intrenches herself; her astonishment at seeing your natural complexion; her fancying you have neglected yourself, in showing the natural colour of your veins and skin; that you ought to paint your face; and be-

* Sister-in-law of the unfortunate madame de Ganges. The name of this lady was Gevaudan.

cause you display the complexion God has given you, you appear to her quite neglected and undressed. Messieurs de Grignan are very clever in thinking hers a natural complexion: this shows the discernment of men, they neither know what they see nor what they say; I have met with those who have even admired inferior beauties.

You have taken a pretty trip to Saint Esprit; you have seen M. de Baville, the terror of Languedoc; you have also seen M. de Broglio *. I consider our Revel as the *Cesar*, and Broglio *the neglected Laridon* †. Has not the chevalier seen them both in the chains of mademoiselle de Bouchet? Broglio was so furious a lover, that he was one cause of her throwing herself into the Carmelites.

I must add, my dear child, that we are no longer angry with our good governors, at which I am delighted; I was almost in despair in thinking them to blame. It is certain, and all our friends agree, that the duke could not say a syllable to the king, neither on the subject of Britany nor the deputation, without great impropriety; Rome occupied every thing. He spoke to M. de Lavardin, and wrote to marshal d'Estrées: madame de Chaulnes has said all that could be said to M. de Croissi; and nothing can be more evident, than the pleasure they would have had in succeeding; but we think no more of it, and if by accident we should obtain it, we shall consider it as a miracle. This is not the greatest evil that arises to me from the death of the pope; I am really grieved when I reflect upon the loss you will sustain by this event.

* Victor Maurice, count de Broglio, commander in Languedoc; he was brother of Charles Amedeus de Broglio, count de Revel.

† See La Fontaine's Fable upon Education, Fab. 105.

I thank you, my child, for making me so completely one of the members of your society, by informing me of what passes in it: nothing is so dear to me, as what comes from you and your family. I recommend to you the care of your health, and the preservation of your youth, and not without reason. I laugh with you at M. de Grignan's gout: this is a fine consolation to a man in pain; but every thing is preferable to the colic. God bless you all; my compliments, remembrances, and caresses, where they are due: you know your own share, my dear child; it is my entire self.

LETTER DCCCCXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 5, 1689.

It had never entered my brain to accuse certain iron wires in the head-dress of being the cause of long faces; this hint would be very useful to certain persons of our acquaintance. I had heard they were very friendly; but no, quite the contrary: these two little wires press against the temples, prevent the circulation of the blood, and cause abscesses; some die in consequence; they may consider themselves fortunate, whose faces are only lengthened an ell, and who become pale as death; but young people, who are more hardy, may recover in time. I am very much inclined to place this story in the class with some others formerly related to me by the good princess de Tarente; however, it is not amiss to know every thing.

I do not in the least doubt that M. de la Garde, who never refused a remedy, will avail himself of that of the lady you mention. You will see him with his head upon

the ground, and his heels in the air, *turning an affair* * like her; I really believe, that if we were to pursue this regimen for any length of time, we should no longer have sore eyes; I have nothing to give you in return for your account of this visit.

We have had a very worthy, sensible, agreeable, unaffected, learned, and every way desirable, visitor with us; a man of great endowments, and capable of entering upon every subject of conversation: he has been here for a week. One of his brothers-in-law is arrived, the abbé de Marbeuf, who spoils nothing; and a brother-in-law of the count de Lis, who would spoil every thing if he opened his lips; this is a secret misanthropist, for he keeps his chagrin to himself; he is very well made, and sings so much like Beaumaviel, that he might be mistaken for him. When our worthy friend departed, every thing was comparatively flat and insipid; we renewed the just observations we made in this country with you, on pleasant and disagreeable company; and fixed that the disagreeable was the most desirable: their absence is a relief; whereas pleasant society leaves us dull and dejected, we cannot easily pursue the old track; in short, it is a great misfortune to associate with sensible people, but it is a misfortune that does not often happen to us.

You ask me for news of our deputation; we wish to think no more of it. Madame de Chaulnes has twice spoken very well to M. de Croissi on the subject. The abbé Têtu is animated by madame de la Fayette to remind the minister, and passes so well in review all that madame de Chaulnes had represented, that every thing is to be hoped from his zeal and earnest endeavour to

* It has already been observed that this was a favourite expression of M. de la Garde.

accomplish what he undertakes. Madame de Chaulnes has intrusted him with the charge of this affair, as she is not always at Versailles; madame de la Fayette does wonders; the duke de Chaulnes has written to marshal d'Estrées, who desires nothing better than to serve us; such is our situation. For my part, I believe M. de Coëtlogon will carry it, for the reasons I gave you the other day. The other candidates are M. de Lanion, and M. de Chateau-Renaud; we wait for the unravelling of all this with a tranquil look, and an undisturbed mind. I thank you for having prevented the chevalier from writing to M. de Cavoie* on this affair; it would have been wrong.

My son laughed immoderately at your madame; he has heard of a certain long visage at Rennes, and wants to know how it has been acquired; he is gone to pay a visit to marshal d'Estrées at Rennes. You ask what we have done with our thirty ships. Alas! what we always do with them. We were delighted to receive them at Brest; this was one of the most important affairs in the world; they all set sail together, steered as far as the island of Ushant, and then returned to Belleisle, from thence to Brest, and there it ended. You find that the person who said there had been no decisive action at sea since the battle of Actium, was quite in the right. Madame de Lamoignon has been brought to bed of a son at Baville; in his way to Paris, the coachman overturned the carriage, and killed the poor child: what say you to having or not having a good coachman? You are right to be pleased with the diversion the gout affords to M. de Grignan's intestines: God preserve the interior of this place, and prevent the outworks from being so dreadfully insulted; for whatever comes under

* Brother-in-law of M. de Coëtlogon.

the denomination of pain is hard to bear; the chevalier will not contradict me. Let me know constantly how the waters of Balaruc agree with him, and at what time your states of Languedoc are to meet; ours will be convened on the 20th of this month at Rennes. Adieu, my dearest child; oh, how glad I should be to walk with you all upon that beautiful terrace!

LETTER DCCCCXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 9, 1689.

No letter, my dear child; I am quite unhappy when I lose this pleasure; to-morrow I shall have two at once: I must accustom myself to these disappointments, for complaint is useless. I am here alone; my son is gone to Rennes to visit marshal d'Estrées, and my daughter-in-law to see her mother. I shall have a lady from Vitré with me to-morrow, whom I like tolerably well, so that I shall not be quite alone. M. de Pommereuil has given marshal d'Estrées the duke de Chaulnes's letter. Madame de Chaulnes has conferred twice, with all her eloquence, with M. de Croissi; the abbé Têtu has a high opinion of the duchess's weight with the minister: if, after this, we lose the deputation, I shall say it is because M. de Chaulnes is at Rome; because M. de Lavardin did not hold the states; because M. de Chateau-Renaud, and M. de Coëtlogon, who are in the service, are preferred; in short, because it was not the will of God, for we have, on our part, exceeded the utmost of our little abilities; and I shall not take the pains to hate persons, who, I am persuaded, are as much vexed at it as myself. Here ends the chapter.

What say you to M. de Seignelai, a minister at the age of six and thirty *? Madame de Lavardin tells me wonders of madame de Mouci and her brother †, who has forbidden his secretary, in a way to enforce obedience, to take any thing whatever, either directly or indirectly; and the better to dispose him to this, he has given him 2000 crowns to begin with, and has doubled his salary from eight to sixteen thousand livres; the wages of the other servants are raised in proportion, to secure them from every kind of temptation. You will agree that this is a great and noble alteration, and very flattering to a soul like this magistrate's. Madame de Mouci, his worthy sister, finding his table and expenses increased, gave him the other day 12,000 livres worth of new plate, and will not even allow her brother to thank her for it, saying it was quite useless to her, and a mere trifle. To speak candidly, I envy such actions as these; it affects me to the heart, to find souls of this stamp; this is making a proper use of riches, and placing virtue in the foremost rank: I thought you would be pleased with this anecdote of a family you love. I also wrote to madame de Mouci, that the king, the parliament, France, and all the pleaders, ought to be congratulated on the appointment of such a man to such a place. I am sure my letter did not displease her; but it is evident that she does not intend to answer it, and that she will not indulge herself in raillery: God bless and guide her, for she will be in paradise even in this world; she is no longer with us, and is very happy.

* Madame Cornuel returning from Versailles at this time, was asked what she had seen there. "Some very curious things," she replied; "love in the grave, and ministers in the cradle."

† Achilles de Harlai was just appointed first president of the parliament of Paris, where he was before attorney-general.

I have been informed that the marquis d'Huxelles has been very well received at court, that the court is at Fontainbleau, and that the duke of Burgundy and his governor* have both an intermitting fever: all this you know, my dear countess. Had I received your letter I would have answered it, and would not thus ridiculously waste my time in beating the bushes. If I had received a visit from madame de Montbrun, I could have written volumes; but every thing here is so uniform, that materials fail. I believe that the states will not be convened till the 25th at Rennes. I do not know the precise time that the parliament will return thither. A president and four counsellors have been created: it is, perhaps, expected that these posts will be filled. M. de Bailleul has resigned his post in favour of his son; M. de Memes officiates for himself: here I am a gazetteer again. Let us talk of Grignan; how is the poor count? where are the enemies, within or without? he must allow us to wish him pains in his arms, that his intestines may escape; but we wish the whole place were in good condition. Does the chevalier return to Balaruc? it would be laying in a good winter stock of health. Where is M. de Carcassonne? is M. de la Garde's head still on the ground, and his heels in the air? was Paulina born with a caul, or is this a rare instance? and you, my child, are you handsome, or in other words, are you well? I constantly think of Grignan, of you all, of your terraces, your fine and glorious prospect; I leave my woods to walk with you; but in this multitude of ideas, some occur that make me almost shiver with terror, when I reflect on the negociation that is at this very instant carrying on to dispossess you of Avignon. Ah! *tell it not in Gath*. Embrace me,

* M. de Beauvilliers.

love me, believe me entirely yours, and reflect that it is now a year, a whole year, since I have seen or met you.

LETTER * DCCCCXXXV.

FROM MADAME DE LA FAYETTE TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, October 8, 1689.

My style will be laconic; I have no head; I have had a fever; I have commissioned M. du Bois to tell you so.

The business of the deputation has completely failed; wonders were performed on all sides; I doubt whether M. de Chaulnes himself, in person, could have obtained it. The king expressed no dislike to M. de Sévigné, but he had long promised it, as he said, to those who were candidates for the office. We must lay aside our hopes till the next assembly of the states: we know not who is the person in question, but this, my dear friend, we know is in question, that you must, on no consideration whatever, spend the winter in Britany. You are old; the Rocks are surrounded with woods; colds and coughs will destroy you; you will grow dull, your mind will lose its energy, and will decay: all this is certain, and worldly affairs are nothing in comparison of what I tell you. Talk to me not of money, nor of debts; I put my hand upon your lips on this subject. M. de Sévigné will send you to Malicorne in his carriage, where M. de Chaulnes's carriage will meet you: you then reach Paris; you will alight at M. de Chaulnes's, for your own house will not be prepared to receive you; you will have no horses; this will be merely a temporary residence, you will return home at your leisure. But to come to the point. You now pay M. de Sévigné for your board, and are keeping house here:

add these together, and you will find that you are living at a greater expense than you suppose, for your house rent still goes on. You will say, "But I am in debt, and I shall be free by this means." Take this into consideration, that you will here find a thousand crowns, with which you may pay off your heaviest debts; this sum is lent you without interest, and you may repay it by instalments as suits your convenience: ask me not whence it comes, nor from whom, you will never know; but it is from persons who are not afraid of losing their money. No arguments upon the subject; words and letters will be unavailing: I will not even read what you write: in short, my dear, you must either come, or renounce my friendship, madame de Chaulnes's, and madame de Lavardin's, for ever: we will not have a friend who is determined to grow old and kill herself by her own fault: your conduct is foolish and weak: you must come as soon as the weather is fine.

LETTER DCCCCXXXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 12, 1689.

Here they are both; but, good heavens! how miserable the first would have made me if I had received it without the second, which informs me that the chevalier's fever has abated, and afforded him a day's rest! This takes away the horror of a continually increasing fever, accompanied with suffocation, delirium, and drowsiness, which all together form a dreadful disorder. The blood, the constitution, the gout, must all combine in this. What a pity it is that such high blood, capable of performing the most brilliant actions, should sometimes perform such ill offices, and render the others useless!

In short, this is a very melancholy affair for all, and for you in particular, whose kindness of heart leads you to be the nurse of all you love. Now I am more than ever at Grignan, though I was frequently there before, from the double interest I take in what passes since this illness. Distance exposes us to write many absurdities; at least, they become so by arriving out of season: you are melancholy, busy, or uneasy, a letter from Britany appears, full of gaiety and trifles: I am ashamed of it, but I have told you a hundred times, these are the ill-timed effects of distance.

I have informed you that I am no longer displeased with M. and madame de Chaulnes. It is certain, and his friends have told me, that he could not, with any degree of propriety, have mentioned the affairs of Britany. He recommended my son to M. de Lavardin, thinking he would have the same desire to serve him that he had; and this was true. He has since written to marshal d'Estrées, and his letter would have had a proper effect, if the king had not publicly declared to all the candidates for the deputation, that it had long been promised; madame de la Fayette tells me this, without saying to whom, but it will shortly be known; she adds that M. de Croissi mentioned my son to the king, who seemed to have no dislike to him; but that the same day his majesty declared himself; and this the marshal expected, who cares very little that the governor of Britany loses this noble privilege, provided he pays his court. Madame de la Fayette has freed him from all his engagements, and thus the business has ended. My son is at Rennes; the marshal, with whom he is well acquainted, having seen him a hundred times at the marchioness d'Huxelles's, boldly contending with Rouville, is much pleased with his visit: he plays every night with him at backgammon; he waits for the ar-

rival of M. de la Tremouille to pay his respects to all, and then returns home with his wife; this is the best plan he can pursue. I am still alone, but find no inconvenience from it: the lady from Vitré will be with me to-morrow, she has been detained by business. I must tell you what madame de la Fayette writes, in the style of a decision of the higher powers, first from herself, then from madame de Chaulnes and madame de Lavardin, threatening to love me no longer if I refuse to return immediately to Paris; saying that I shall be ill here, that I shall die, that my mind will decay, that, in short, I must make no opposition but come, and that she will not even read my frivolous reasons to the contrary. There is a vivacity and friendship in this, my dear, that pleases me. These are the plans she proposes to me: I am to go to Malicorne in my son's carriage; madame de Chaulnes is to dispatch the duke's there to meet me; I am to take up my abode with her at Paris; I am to buy no horses till the spring; and the best of all is, I am to find a thousand crowns in my coffer, from a person who has no occasion for the money, who will lend it without interest, and will not hurry me to repay it; and that I must set out immediately. This is a long letter for a person just recovered from a fever; I answered it in the same way with gratitude, but treating it as a jest, assuring her that the company of my son and his wife, books, and the hope of returning to Paris in the summer, without lodging out of my own house, or being in want of an equipage, as I shall then have one, will not be irksome to me; and I shall not then owe a thousand crowns to a generous friend, whose noble and magnanimous conduct would distress me more than all the bailiffs in christendom. I added, that I gave her my word I would not be ill, would not grow old, nor foolish, and that she would still love me notwithstand-

ing her threat; this is the way in which I answered my three good friends. I will, some day, show you madame de la Fayette's letter. Good heavens, what a proposal! to be out of my own house, to be dependent, to have no carriage, and to be a thousand crowns in debt! Indeed, my dear child, I would infinitely rather be here: the horrors of a winter in the country, are worse in prospect than reality. Tell me whether you approve my conduct; were you at Paris, ah! that might indeed shake my resolution; but this is not the case. I have taken my time, and concerted my measures accordingly, and were you now to fly there like a bird, I know not whether my reason would not entreat yours, with the permission of our friendship, to let me complete certain little payments this winter, which will constitute the repose of my life. I could not refrain from relating this trifle to you, hoping it will not come unseasonably, and that the chevalier will enjoy as good a state of health as I wish him.

You astonish me in what you say of M. de Chaulnes. I assure you that during our journey it was impossible to be more agreeable than he made himself; I know not whether your *Genius* inspired him with vivacity, but you would certainly have found him as I described him. I no longer trace a resemblance to him in the portrait you have drawn. My son imagined, that the sneering woman he mentioned, had desired him not to speak in his behalf, but he now finds he was mistaken.

Your dream has surprised me; you think it a false one, because you did not perceive a single tree before the door; but you will laugh to hear that it is true: your brother cut down all the trees two years ago; he piques himself upon having a fine prospect, according to your desire, and carries his passion to such a height, that he is going to build a low wall round the lawn, and to turn

the tennis-court into a bowling-green; so that there will be nothing between the road but a ha-ha. It is true, that when this is finished it will be a great improvement, and add much to the beauty of the lawn; it is planned after a design of M. de Notre's, and the *place Coulanges* is planted with orange-trees. The future, as well as the past, should have displayed itself to you in this dream. I preserve your letters and your dream for my son and his wife, who will be charmed with your remembrances.

I am far from being upon ill terms with M. and madame de Pontchartrain*; I saw them at Paris since your departure; I have written to them both. The gentleman has already answered mine and my son's letter very agreeably; there is nothing particular in my manners towards them, for it is no crime to be our governor's friend. I return my dear count's friendly regards doublefold, I honour and salute the sage La Garde, I give a kiss to Paulina, and my heart to my dear child. God restore the chevalier, and may this letter find you all in health and happiness. Tell me which is the chevalier's apartment, that I may be there with you. The abbé Bigorré informs me that M. de Niel fell down the other day in the king's chamber, by which he received a contusion; Felix bled him, and cut the artery, and it was necessary to perform the grand operation upon him immediately: what say you to this, M. de Grignan? I know not which I pity the most; him

* Louis Phillpeaux, count de Pontchartrain, succeeded in September 1689 to M. Pelletier, as comptroller-general of the finances, upon his predecessor desiring leave to retire. M. de Pontchartrain had been first president of the parliament of Britany, and had for some time officiated as intendant of that province. It was at this time that he had some misunderstanding with the duke de Chaulnes. He was afterwards minister and secretary of state in the marine department, and then chancellor of F...

who suffered, or the king's first surgeon, who cut an artery.

LETTER DCCCCXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 16, 1689.

How happy I am, my dear child, that the bark has produced its usual effect! I trembled, I own, when I opened your letter, for every thing is to be feared from such a constitution as the chevalier's. How fortunate that so healing a medicine should agree with the heat of his blood! You have great reason to believe that I was uncommonly interested in the event of this disorder. But as you are the centre of all proceedings, and the source of all health, I congratulate you on your success. But I am still more astonished that the gout should have cured M. de Grignan's colic, and that the fine weather has driven away the gout, than that the bark should have cured a fever. You may then take to yourself the credit of the rice diet, which is so softening, and which may have wrought all these miracles. I take care not to be absent from Grignan, now you have the pleasure of seeing all your Grignans in such good health; I am too deeply interested. I cannot now go to Paris, lest I should be absent from thence: madame de Lavardin's manner of pressing me, and of facilitating my journey, and madame de Chaulnes's style, are very amusing. She seems to consider herself governess of Britany, but I shall show her that madame d'Estrées is the present governess*, and that I am no longer under her laws. Indeed they are excellent friends; I do not think it

* Marshal d'Estrées commanded in Britany in the absence of M. de Chaulnes.

possible to use more forcible arguments, or to devise more solid expedients; and all this because they fear my present situation is dull, that I shall be ill, that my mind will lose its activity, and, in short, that I shall die; so they want to see me, keep me, and govern me. M. du Bois is also an accomplice: this is a pleasing conspiracy; I like it, and am obliged to them for it, without being at all moved. I will keep their letters for you; you will see whether friendship and truth do not shine in them.

I hear that M. de Coëtlogon is to have the deputation: I never doubted it; neither do I think that M. de Chaulnes doubted it. He is not without discernment: he foresaw the return of the parliament, the present of the city of Rennes, and the share M. de Coëtlogon seemed to have in all this, as governor of the city where the states are held. Every thing is in his favour; he is at an enormous expense; it is fortunate that the journey to Rome confuses this affair; I question whether this good duke could with all his might and main have obtained it; so God orders every thing for the best. But when I accused M. de Chaulnes of negligence, I was not for depriving him of the means of justification. What, my child! shall I find you, a strict Cartesian, reasonable and just as your ideas are, condemning him as guilty when he is not so, because he has been deficient in activity upon another occasion? could this prevent you from seeing other objects in their true light? This is a strange sort of justice; you would have been sorry if the fourth court of inquests had judged your cause thus: I, with all my weakness, felt, in this respect, as if we had obtained the deputation. I expressed myself, however, as being hurt when I wrote upon the subject; but I thought he would have found a pass-

port with you, and that you would have recollected what I often repeat, "What is good, is good; and what is true, is true." This should always be viewed in the same light; if there be many points of reflection in other respects, they should not be confounded here, any more than certain waters with other certain rivers. I thought too you would recollect that ingratitude was the object of my greatest aversion; indeed, I detest it, and I chase it wherever I find it: but I see you have forgotten all this, since you supposed there was something forced in what I said to you. I felt it, but spare me, at least, the thought of having wished to display such ridiculous provincial generosity; I should be sorry if you thought me so changed. This pretty sentiment flowed so naturally from my pen, that I resume the subject again very frankly, and conjure you to be convinced, with the same justice, that if tardiness and negligence appeared on the late occasion, the justification is not less true, nor ungrateful people less ungrateful; in truth, these things should not be confounded; and you now find that the good governors were not to blame.

I am not recovered from my surprise, respecting the alteration you told me you had found in M. de Chaulnes's understanding. Indeed I do not know him again; he was quite a different man during our little journey; it was your *Genius* that animated him: your presence, added to the business of Rome, was too much; they overcame him. There is a Venetian cardinal of the name of Barbarigo, bishop of Padua, who had more votes than were necessary for his being elected pope; but the *accessit** spoiled all. I know not what this means;

* The arrival of the duke de Chaulnes at Rome with a large sum of money.

all I can learn is, that it prevents the election of a pope; but still there will be one too soon: this melancholy reflection is often the companion of my walks.

I am pleased with Coulanges's praise of Paulina; it is well applied, and makes me understand what sort of charms she possesses, curbed however by persons who have not given her the best nose* in the world. If the count had given her his fine eyes and fine person, and left the rest to you, Paulina would have set the world on fire†; she would have been irresistible: this pretty mixture is a thousand times better, and must certainly form a very pretty personage. Her sprightliness resembles yours; your wit always bore away the palm, as you say of hers; I like this panegyric. She will soon learn Italian, with the assistance of a better mistress than you had. You deserve as excellent a daughter as mine has been. I told you, that you might do what you wished with yours, from her disposition to please you; she appears to me worthy of your love. I am quite alone; my son and his wife are still at Rennes; my visitor from Vitré is returned; I am very well, so do not pity me. My son waits the arrival of M. de la Tremouille, who is hourly expected. He is with marshal d'Estrées as with one of his acquaintance, and plays every evening with him at backgammon. Every countenance at Rennes is lighted with joy, upon the return of the parliament, which will take place on the first of December; the states will meet on the 22d of this month; the marshal is very polite and agreeable; the Bretons are not displeased at the change; this, my dear child, is all the news I can tell you. Be not uneasy about my solitude, I do not dislike it; my daugh-

* Paulina's nose resembled her grandmother's.

† This was an expression applied by M. de Treville to madame de Grignan herself, when she appeared at court in the zenith of her beauty.

ter-in-law will soon return. I take care of my health, I should not like to be ill here; when it is fine, I walk; when it is wet or foggy, I do not stir; I have learned wisdom. But you who are the queen and the *efficient cause* of health in others, be careful of your own, and consider that your preservation is a still greater blessing than that you have already bestowed on them.

Madame de Mouci has made another present to her brother of a beautiful piece of Bellièvres tapestry; the subject is, the beheading of St. John: it is worth 2000 pistoles. How happy she is, to be able to make such pretty presents! I think M. de Grignan issues very good orders against *the half-converted*. I find, you are to have M. de Vins in your neighbourhood; his grandfather* made a great figure there formerly. It is said here that the king of England has defeated M. de Schomberg: I shall not give credit to this, till the news reaches St. Germain.

LETTER DCCCCXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 19, 1689.

You may be angry with M. de Chaulnes if you please; for my part, I cannot; you have justified him to me, your words have produced their effect upon my mind. I shall not change my opinion, more particularly as the constant remembrance of him, of Grignan, Toulon, and Rome, from whence he wrote to me on the fourth, act upon my heart, as if he had really done me a kindness: I can discover nothing but pleasing attentions; and the most I said at first was, that I never knew a person re-

* Hubert de Vins made himself respected by the League party in Provence and in Dauphiny.

member those he had forgotten. But I now discover his policy, and I do not comprehend how you messieurs de Grignans, who are courtiers, particularly the governor of Provence, can think it strange, that knowing, as he did before we could hear it, that for various reasons this deputation would fall to M. de Coëtlogon's lot, he should content himself with simply mentioning his intention to M. de Lavardin on his departure, and with writing to marshal d'Estrées. It may easily be conceived that he was not willing to lay himself open, nor to take offence at having it no longer in his power to name a deputy, when he is happy enough to be able to conceal the governor of Britany behind the ambassador of Rome, and to puzzle all inquiry by his absence. It is a fortunate circumstance that it falls to M. de Coëtlogon's lot, as he had no share in the appointment; if he could not have succeeded in preventing it, he would have had a bitter dose to swallow; and I say too, that if he had not been ambassador, I think, in good policy as a courtier, the king being engaged to M. de Cavoie, that he ought to have seemed reconciled to it, rather than appear in his government with a deputy that was disagreeable to him. I make M. de Grignan the judge of what I say, and I consider the hasty conclusion you draw in your letter as the effect of your friendship, and not the result of your reflection: in God's name tell me whether I have made a convert of you; for my part, I cannot alter my belief. Formerly the situation of a governor was the most agreeable in the world; he chose whom he pleased, and the king approved him without any difficulty; this charming prerogative has, by degrees, vanished. M. de Charost made the first encroachment upon it, he made Monsieur write; and by means of this trick, he, or rather his son, was not deputy till two years after; the enemies after-

wards became powerful, and weighed very heavily upon Britany and the governor. Gacé completed the ruin of the whole through M. de Cavoie, and it was necessary to have recourse to a hasty ill-cemented peace to avoid this mortification; at length the deputation is this year compromised, and given to a man who really is entitled to it, who has never had it; and M. de Chaulnes was not forced to consent. All this is according to rule; should we not be just, and place ourselves in the situation of others? this is never done. My son is clever, he is well qualified for the office, but he has quitted the service, and it has been made up to him by the arriere-ban. M. de Chaulnes, however, had hoped to give a favourable turn to all these things, by means of circumstances which have brought Britany into favour this year. God commands a hasty journey to Rome; nothing is to be mentioned to the king but Rome, Rome; what can be done? This is an arrangement of Providence; it is a cruel journey to us, equally fatal to my son and to my daughter. This letter, my dear child, is somewhat long and tedious, I am aware of it; but it is dangerous to put me in a train to talk: one word more, however; did not the duke write to you from Rome? Madame de Chaulnes is delighted to hear that he is not only well, but that he was saluted by the discharge of cannon as ambassador, without giving up the franchises, which enraged the Spanish ambassador; he had desired all the cardinals to prevent it. The court is pleased at this auspicious beginning, and considers it as a good omen. A word to the duchess upon this subject would be very becoming. I enclose you the abbé Bigorré's billet; but is this correcting myself? Well, it shall positively be the last time.

I am still alone here, but I am not dull; my daugh-

ter-in-law will return in four or five days. My son is the marshal's favourite: Revel, who is going, will keep him till the opening of the states; he also expects M. de la Tremouille.

LETTER DCCCCXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 23, 1689.

I AM still alone, my dear child, without being dull; my health is good: I have plenty of books, work, and fine weather; these, with a little reason, go a great way. I see, notwithstanding all that my son and his wife tell me of their great desire to see me, that they are delighted to be at Rennes; and I, from this moment, am really glad they are there. I forbid their returning, I even think they are right: there is very good society at Rennes, and every thing there is brilliant with joy; the Bretons appear insensible to the millions that are going to be demanded of the province; they think only of the return of the parliament to their poor city, and to the finest palace in France; this is where the states are held; nothing can be more magnificent. Curiosity also drew many people thither to see the new faces of marshal d'Estrées, M. de Pommereuil, M. d'Eaubonne, M. de Lezonnet, instead of messieurs de Chaulnes, de Ficubet, de Harlay, or d'Harouis; men are fond of variety. M. de la Tremouille passed through Vitré three days ago; he was received with great noise on account of his knighthood; this is one of the occasions where honours and even duties are increased according to the prerogative of certain estates. He makes a *tremendous* appearance, with his fine figure, and his blue ribbon; no one but M. de Grignan can be compared to him, I would even say in *beauty*, were I not afraid of offending

the count, for it is certain that M. de la Tremouille surpasses him in that point. He sent his compliments, and that he would have waited upon me if his retinue had not been so fatigued; and I returned them, without having any. The abbé de Roquette is with him: he wrote me a very witty letter, full of praise and affection, just as his uncle would have done. The states met yesterday: I have some doubt of the beauty of the speeches. The nobility are pleased at having M. de la Tremouille for their president; they do not like M. de Rohan, though a man of family: when they see him without the order of the Holy Ghost, it will be a great humiliation; for indeed he ought not to be without it, it is a star upon a duke and a peer.

So much for Britany. You will, perhaps, be tired of it; but these are the natural fruits of our garden; we will talk of Provence by and by. Let us say something of the pope, for there is one; if I had been at Paris, I would have gone to kiss his mule in the chamber of the abbé Bigorre; he is there painted to perfection. It is cardinal Ottoboni, a Venetian *, the intimate friend of M. and madame de Chaulnes, and also of madame de Carman †, whose merit and beauty he adored, when she was eighteen. This is the man we have to deal with; there is the duke tracing out the greatest interests, depriving you of your dear Avignon: I wish he may display on this occasion all the good sense I have known him to possess; I do not think he has left any of it behind him. Madame de Lavardin informs me that this Ottoboni is the most worthy and the most learned man in all the sacred college; but he is seventy-nine years old: has not the mind passed the bar at this age? The

* Elected pope October 6, under the name of Alexander VIII.

† Madame de Carman was at Rome with M. and madame de Chaulnes in 1670. She was then madame de Marinais.

poor dear abbé said, yes; but the late M. d'Arles said, no *. So that we must believe that, being chosen, he will discharge this high office with ability. For my part, I should be of the opinion of Patrix; that it was not worth while to put on the papal robes at so great an age, any more than to put on his clothes again on his recovery from a fit of illness, at his time of life. Madame de Chaulnes very much fears that her husband will be left at Rome, to be ready for the approaching conclave. Let us say a few words respecting this duchess; I will tell you a secret that will make you love her. But you must first believe, that if they could, they would have been delighted to have given the deputation to my son; it may easily be supposed, that they would much rather he should have had it than M. de Coëtlogon. Nor can we imagine that they interested themselves in behalf of the latter, as you all say, since M. de Chaulnes mentioned my son to M. de Lavardin, recommended him to the marshal by letter; and madame de Chaulnes, supported by the lively abbé Têtu, mentioned him twice to M. de Croissi; this appears very clearly, but observe the sequel. This good duchess, really grieved that M. de Chaulnes's presence before his departure had not operated in favour of the deputation, as they both had hoped, formed the idea, with madame de la Fayette and madame de Lavardin, to make me come to Paris, imagining that the failure of this business keeps me in Britany, and that her absence from Rennes throws me upon the Rocks; for she supposes, if the duke had held the states, I should not

* Madame de Sévigné quotes the example of the abbé de Coulanges, her uncle, who died August 23, 1687, aged eighty; and that of M. d'Arles, M. de Grignan's uncle, who died March 9, 1689, aged eighty-six; to infer that the minds of those who attain their eightieth year, decay more sensibly in some than in others.

have quitted her. All these ideas agitated her, and gave such strength to the conspiracy of my friends, as greatly harassed me; and, in short, it was madame de Chaulnes who was to lend the thousand crowns, but with so good a heart, and so good a grace, and with such an earnest desire that the offer should be accepted, that madame de la Fayette, thoroughly convinced of the sincerity and friendship of this good duchess towards me, earnestly entreats me to plague myself no more about the deputation. Madame de Chaulnes continues to write to me that what is deferred is not lost; that my son is young; that many people wait ten or fifteen years for this place; and that it is her business, without saying a syllable about the thousand crowns. I shall, however, mention the subject to her, as madame de la Fayette has intrusted me with the secret; the duchess wished to put them into the hands of Beaulieu, that I might think they had fallen from the clouds; but all this neither tempted nor bewildered me, for such conduct would lead me to discharge my debts, more than all the bailiffs in the world. I have made a just observation on the misfortune of having debts; those which press us are pressing, those which do not press us are more pressing still. This is a long discourse, but I was willing to show you the bottom of her bag, and of my own; and how difficult it is, not to have a good opinion of the heart of a person who is sincere, and who is constantly thinking of me with such friendly sentiments. My friends at Paris are satisfied with the duchess's conduct; you see how the world goes, and how often we pass sentence without hearing both parties. I hope you will not be tired of reading these details, for I own it would be difficult to correct myself, as I take great pleasure in relating them to you. But I conclude, my dear child, embracing you with an af-

fection that is singular in its kind. I do not yet talk of my schemes; I conjecture that I shall be free towards the end of the summer, it is a long time till then: we will concert our measures together, having the same intention to meet once more.

LETTER DCCCCXL.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 26, 1689.

I CONCLUDE, my dear child, that, at this very moment, you are no longer in possession of Avignon. The first thing the king has done with regard to this new pope, who is perfectly agreeable to him, and surpasses our hopes, is to give up to him this charming spot, which was so advantageous to you *: this reflection overwhelms me with grief. I have a little account to give you from the abbé Bigotré that you will not be displeased to hear. M. de Chaulnes is fortunate indeed; no one can dispute his claim of being the best pope-maker in the world. The present pope is a better man than we could hope for; he is a Venetian; it was he who answered on the fourth of October to the ambassador's compliments; and on the sixth, by way of thanking him, M. de Chaulnes made him a pope; for this exaltation was a sudden performance quite in the French style, against the advice of the Spaniards and Germans. He is one of the most learned men of the sacred college, and has no other fault than being eighty years of age. This news has quite enraptured madame de Chaulnes; the holy father has inquired after her and

* The Venetian county and Avignon, which were in the possession of France, and from which M. de Grignan derived considerable advantages during the time of the quarrel with the court of Rome.

madame de Carman, saying he should die contented if he could see them once more. All France has been to compliment the duchess; I suppose you have written a congratulatory line to her, as well as to the duke, though he deprives you of Avignon. This is the luckiest event in the world for him: you know all this; but it is impossible not to chat.

M. d'Arles is now with you; he wrote to me from Paris, and I shall answer him at Grignan, and as he speaks to me of his abdication *, I shall not hesitate to tell him my thoughts on the subject, though it be a settled thing, and he says M. de Pomponne and madame de Vins have approved it: it is so easy to cheat people into approbation, that it ought not to constitute authority. He tells me it was of no use but to M. de Grignan; I want only this to confute him: is the being useful to an elder brother in such a place, nothing? He need only consider what pleasure this will give to M. d'Aix, to know how mortifying it must be to M. de Grignan. Besides, when did a Grignan think it no object to be useful to his family? Those who love one another, as you say, to the last drop of their blood, in whatever form it may be, have they not given sufficient proof, on all public occasions, that they are but one? how comes it, then, that the archbishop pleases to retract, and renounce this honourable and good reputation? I am of your opinion, that it is being pure-

* This place was that of president of the states of Provence, which M. d'Arles (John-Baptist Adhemar de Monteil) had filled after M. de Marseilles (Toussaint de Forbin). But by the nomination of M. de Vallage (Daniel de Cosnac) to the archbishopric of Aix, M. d'Arles being obliged to give up to him the place of president, he thought it no longer incumbent on him to assist at the assembly of the states, to avoid being only in the second place, according to the rank of his archbishopric.

tilipus indeed, to be hurt by a strip of wood upon a bench, which constitutes all the difference of place, which falls neither upon the person nor the name, and which only exists in this *assembly*, for a few days, as it relates to the archbishop of Aix and the archbishop of Arles. Should this be sufficient to urge him to speak to the king, in the tone of a man who had long made a sacrifice, the weight and disgust of which are at last become insupportable? Is it possible that the king should have really entered into the merits of this complaint, and not have been surprised that the honour of serving, which was so highly valued upon entering on the office, could no longer support him against a mortification which was only imaginary? In short, my child, I am hurt at this abdication, and wish he may repent of this as of the other things, in order to avenge us. But I have said so much on this subject, that I shall refer the archbishop to it, if he will do me the honour of allowing me to speak my sentiments of what he tells me, and I shall only slightly touch upon it in my answer to his letter.

But a word respecting madame de Reinié *: what a fury! Did you not think she was dead, and that her spirit came to persecute you with her noise, as in her lifetime? For my part, I should have been terribly frightened, and should certainly have made the sign of the cross; but I believe something more is necessary to get rid of her. Is it possible a woman could travel 150 leagues to demand money of a person who dies with impatience to pay it, and who sends it as soon as possible? No arrival at Grignan could astonish me so much as hers; I gave an involuntary shriek at hearing it. You are, however, quite right to behave civilly to

* A shopkeeper at Paris.

her; but how could you avoid her paws, and that torrent of words which drowns and overwhelms? I am quite pleased at what you tell me of Balaruc, I have seen it upon the map. It is a melancholy thing that the chevalier can find no relief, and that his disorder should have destroyed all the good effects which we at first thought the waters had produced; I feel this misfortune keenly. These waters are very violent: I would not trust my limbs in them, and particularly since I have now no ailment in my hands. I know not where all those little extravagant disorders are concealed; I sometimes think treason is going forward, I am so well. I shall very much pity you, when you are all separated; you will then really have no company but madame Reinié, and one other person who I must own is as hateful to me as to you. But you sometimes bid me say certain things only to the echoes: I shall take care not to intrust them with any thing: we have one in the *Place Coulanges*, like that at La Trousse, a little slanderer, who returns word for word close to the ear. By the bye M. de la Trousse has received very little benefit from the waters of Bourbon.

The day after I wrote to you, I saw my daughter-in-law return when I least expected her; she left Rennes, in spite of every one, and all the amusements there, to come, as she says, to me, preferring this pleasure to all the entertainments of the states. This surprised me, and would have made me uneasy, if I had not perceived that she was really pleased, and that this was done with as good a heart as it was with a good grace. Du Mesnil has introduced the opera of Atys at Rennes; it is short-cord, but is very pretty. My daughter-in-law was once there, and was very well pleased, but is still more so at being returned; she says, "Every body tormented me at Rennes upon my being so desirous to return to the

Rocks; but, when I reminded them that it was to be with you, they all agreed that I was right; particularly marshal d'Estrées, M. de Rennes, M. de la Tremouille, and M. de Pommereuil." In short, here she is; I judged that this little account would not make you quarrel with her. As to my son, the marshal would not let him come away; he is the only person with whom he converses unreservedly *. He is quite unhappy that my son is not appointed deputy; he was very desirous of rendering us this little service, as well as madame de la Fayette, who had solicited his interest upon the occasion. He does not much approve of M. de Cavoie, the friend of M. de Seignelai; you see the rest.

Our states met on Saturday the 22d; there was a great throng, crowd, and confusion; but the marshal spoke very well, and better than was expected; the first president, *de communi martyrum*; M. de Pommereuil very well in his way, but not so well as Ficubet and de Harlay, the beauty of whose speeches charmed their hearers; in all the harangues the duke de Chaulnes was highly praised, and the news of the exaltation arrived very opportunely on the same day. The next day M. de Pommereuil asked three millions for the king, which were immediately granted; though in fact, we know not well where they are to be had, with M. d'Harouis's contest; but with regard to the grace with which it was done, nothing could exceed it. After this hope-

* We find this marshal in the list of Ninon's lovers, when he was only count d'Estrées. From this circumstance partly arose his attachment to M. de Sévigné: it was like a school friendship. It was this count d'Estrées who, coming after Villarceaux, disputed his claims to the child to which Ninon gave birth at that period. Not being able to agree, like Rabelais' judge, they cast the dice for him. Fate consigned this child to the count d'Estrées, who afterwards distinguished himself in the navy by the name of La Boissière.

ful beginning, Revel set out to resume, he trusts, his first profession. He called here on Monday, but only staid to dinner, and went to sleep at Laval. We asked him what sort of death all his mistresses had chosen: he replied wittily, that whatever it might be, they would choose it with M. de la Trémouille and the count d'Estrées, in whose hands he had left them. We talked of the chevalier; he appeared to me to be very much unfrozen in his esteem for him; he boasted of having known him in peace and in war; I also assured him that he did not love one who was ungrateful. He hopes to be sent into Germany with marshal de Lorges; I recommended the marquis de Grignan to him; he told me it was for him to request the marquis's protection, he was so much out of exercise. How hard it will be, my dear child, if you cannot see your son this winter! is he not eighteen this month? The Germans are very provoking with their winter campaign.

We pass our time here very quietly; this you cannot doubt; but very swiftly, which will surprise you: work, walking, conversation, reading, all these are called in to our assistance. Speaking of books, you tell me wonders of M. Nicole's last production; I have read some passages that appeared to me very fine; the author's style enlightens as you say, and makes us enter into ourselves, in such a way as discovers the beauty of his mind, and the goodness of his heart; for he never scolds out of season, which is the worst thing in the world, and never produces the desired effect. I did not purchase the book at the time, which was in Lent: I contented myself with the good Le Tourneux*. We are

* Nicholas de Tourneux, confessor of Port-Royal, so well known by his excellent work entitled the Christian Year, and by a great number of other important works.

reading a treatise of the pious man of Port-Royal*, upon continual prayer, which is a sequel to certain pious works, that are very fine; but this, which is much larger, is so spiritual, so luminous, and so holy, that though it be a thousand degrees above our understandings, it does not fail to please and charm us. We are delighted to find that there have been, and still are, people in the world, to whom God has communicated his Holy Spirit and grace in such abundance; but, good heavens! when shall we be possessed of one little spark, of one single degree? How sad it is to find ourselves so far behind here, and so near in other things! fie, fie, let us not name this misfortune! we ought to humble ourselves at it a hundred times a day.

It is a month since the news of M. de Schomberg's defeat came to this country; it was sent from St. Malo to M. de Louvois; but as it has not yet been confirmed by a courier to the queen of England, it is supposed to be false.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ THE YOUNGER.

I HAVE seen all the kind things, my dear sister, that you have said of M. de Sévigné and myself. He is still at Rennes, and I have had sense enough not to hesitate a moment in repairing to madame de Sévigné. I am certain you will not disapprove of my taste, and that this preference will not lessen me in your opinion. I shall not talk to you of the deputation, the subject is exhausted; we bear our misfortune so well, that it shows we were worthy of what we wished to obtain. I am delighted, my dear sister, to find that our apartment is ready at Grignan; I embrace you affectionately; will

* John Hamon, physician to Port-Royal, author of several very pious and enlightened writings.

you not allow me to do so? I would also embrace M. de Grignan if I dared; but my love for him is so great, that I hesitate.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

INDEED, it is with regret I resume the pen, for she uses it well; but it is only that I may embrace my dear countess.

LETTER DCCCCXLI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 30, 1689.

LET us talk of the grief of separation; I have long felt for you, and have said that you would be too much alive to the misfortune of having had such delightful society; but you have changed your opinion. I told you in the summer that the chevalier might probably pass the winter at Avignon, or in some other part of Provence, to enjoy your brilliant sunshine, and add a mild winter by way of appendix to the waters of Balaruc, as many people do who dread the cold of Paris; you repulsed me unmercifully, and said this was wishing the worst that could happen to him; that if he were to remain there, it would be a sign that he was too ill to return; that otherwise he would go back to see his friends and the world. Tell me, then, what has happened, to make you now think he would do well to spend the winter in Provence; for I am convinced in my own mind that, the waters not having succeeded with him, he would pass a melancholy winter at Paris in that little chamber, with your beautiful picture, which does not utter a syllable, say what we will to it; and if it pleases God that he should be ill, and utter piercing cries, he must in that

case infinitely regret your absence, for he is not a man to receive trifling consolations; we must hope it will not come to this. My advice therefore would have been, to try the climate of Provence this year only, as it was so near at hand. You will acquaint me with the manner in which all your separations take place. M. d'Arles is with you: you have given him my letter; I am more pleased than ever at having told him my sentiments freely of his abdication. He boasted of having obtained the approbation of madame de Vins; but she informs me that he concealed this resolution from her, thinking very justly that she would disapprove it on account of M. de Grignan, and several other things relative to it; this, then, is the way in which madame de Vins and M. de Pomponne approve of this measure. You did not inform me of the king's answer, which you were so curious to know; for my part, I do not retract what I said upon this subject.

It is certain that the first thing M. de Chaulnes did the day after the exaltation, was to give up Avignon. Good heavens, my dear child, what an affecting thought is this! it is a grief too that is justly founded, considering the circumstances into which it throws you. When I reflect and speak upon this subject, it becomes my own business, I can think of nothing else. But I must suppress these bitter thoughts in my letters; they only renew them in your heart; but they will sometimes escape. It is said that M. de Lorraine is going with his troops into winter-quarters; we shall do the same, if this be the case, and you will then soon see your son again; I wish you this consolation.

The taking of Bonn, and the death of baron d'Asfeld *,

* Elder brother of the marshal and the abbé d'Asfeld. He commanded in Bonn, where he made a vigorous defence; sustained an assault, in which he was mortally wounded; surrendered, October 12, and made an

have caused some sorrow; the king and M. de Louvois regret his loss, and praise him highly as an able officer, and a skilful negociator. M. de Chaulnes's negociation may continue longer than was supposed; he is considered as the only person that can inspire the pope with a true desire to restore peace to the Christian princes. His holiness does not at all like cardinal d'Estrées, who it is thought will return to court. We shall see what God has ordained: "Leave him alone," said the holy bishop of Angers, who came to pay his visit at the age of ninety-two, with the same good sense as formerly. Adieu, my dear child. Why do you say you have lost your beauty? why are you heated? why is your blood agitated? my own is affected at it: you are too much alive, you have too much sensibility; your nights partake of your agitations by day: endeavour to calm yourself, avail yourself of your fortitude, your philosophy, your christianity, to support the burden of sorrows which Providence allots you. Your sister-in-law says a thousand affectionate things to you by me; one of her whims is, to make me talk of you. I embrace M. de Grignan; I no longer know how I stand with the rest; I fear that, ere this reaches you, the birds will all be flown. We had your sunshine here for some time, and you had our showers; but for these two days past, I believe every thing has resumed its former station; so that you must now have fine weather. Paulina has written me a charming letter; she says with great audacity, that *she has no fear of destroying**; that, on the contrary, she pretends to surpass

honourable capitulation twenty-seven days after the trenches were opened, and after a blockade of upwards of three months, during which time the enemy had destroyed the city by cannon and bombs, before they began to besiege it in form.

* Allusion to the hackneyed expression of false modesty, "I fear, in writing to you, (or speaking to you), that I shall destroy the favourable idea you have received of me."

the praises Coulanges has bestowed upon her, that she learns Italian, that you are her mistress, and that she reads *Il Pastor Fido;* and then asks me a very odd question, little hussey! Truly, I send her back to her relations.

LETTER DCCCCXLII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 2, 1689.

Your letters come now more regularly than when the weather was fine. The sky of your Provence, however, looks terrifying; you are not accustomed to these torrents; you paint your castle in great disorder, and if you had not saved all your beautiful furniture, and particularly your cabinet, that is worthy of a place at Versailles, I should have been very much grieved. We begin to feel the rain, but as we have still some fine sunny rays, I profit by them with pleasure, because this soil is as dry and pleasant as that of our poor Livri; so that I shall often walk. The beginning of your letter says great things in few words; Ottoboni, *pope;* the county, *given up;* the king and M. de Chaulnes, *triumphant;* and madame de Grignan, *ruined;* this it is that grieves me to the heart; we must endeavour at least to let hope supply the place of the solid consolation which his majesty gave you. If you should enter upon this business towards the end of next year, and should both go to Paris, I should find my account in it, as the knighthood would take place at the same time. But I cannot comprehend M. de Grignan's idea, *alone at Easter;* I can better understand that of returning to Grignan to spend the winter after the assembly, notwithstanding the north wind, which becomes still more untractable

at that time; this would, at least, agree with the chevalier's health and your business. In short, my dear, you are all wise folks, your conventicle is met, you will take proper measures, and we will confide in such good heads. I am very desirous that M. d'Arles should tell you his reasons, and also that he should see my letter; we are upon sufficiently good terms for me to tell him my sentiments upon a subject which he mentions to me first; I beg you will not allow him to place madame de Vins among the number of those he has consulted, and whose approbation he has received. You think my friends have proved their regard for me by their proposals; you are right; nothing could be more kind; but it is enough, to have had the pleasure of this trial of their hearts and friendship; for it would have been doing little honour to my first resolution, to have changed it, and have been burthened with another debt of a thousand crowns. Indeed, my child, there were no other steps to be taken than those I took, that is, to be sensible of their kindness, and grateful for it. If I were to publish a gazette of the state of my health, you would be convinced that I shall keep my promise with madame de la Fayette; you would see under the article of *the bladder*, that that part of the country was in a state of perfect tranquillity; that the sandy people, who formerly invaded it, are carrying on their operations in more distant lands; that letters have been received from the extremities of the kingdom, which declare that the legs were never in better condition, nor more fit for service; that the hands, which are upon the frontiers, are no longer subject to the caprices of the nerves, their neighbours, or the vapours, their allies: in short, that this state would be a perfect country, if the fountain of youth could be found in it; this is its only misfortune. After this ridiculous gazette, which you have

desired, you may, I think, be quite easy with regard to my health.

You seem to be making some reparation to M. de Chaulnes's understanding; you find it so excellent at Rennes, that you are obliged to think he was meditating upon all these important affairs when he was at Grignan; he is therefore restored to your good opinion in this respect; let him be so also on the subject of the deputations. He was not wrong to dispose of them for fifteen years, without mentioning it to the king, as marshal de la Millarie always did *. But a change has taken place with regard to this, for these four years past, as in every thing else. What snakes has he not swallowed! you have seen it. He knows that his good friends have found out a new road for deputations; he is aware of it, and has always said to my son †, except this year, that it was necessary to be a courtier now, as the times are changed. He thought the nobility and their commander might have had some influence this year: at least, he had reason to believe that his recommendation would do something, either by writing from the province, where he was rendering important services, or by setting out for Rome. His timidity, or the impossibility of speaking of Britany, prevented his proposing the deputation to the king; he only recommended it to M. de Lavardin, and wrote on the subject to marshal d'Estrées: nor do I yet know, if he did not expect to find M. de Coetlogon in his way, and that he would thereby only have exposed himself; I believe this is the truth of the affair. It is so certain that nothing is thought of but pleasing the city of Rennes, that by

* He was governor of Nantes and Brest, and lieutenant-general of Upper and Lower Britany.

† M. de Sévigné had quitted the court, upon retiring from the army.

the most unheard-of measures, which I am very much pleased at, the deputation of the clergy has been given to M. de Rennes by a lettre de cachet; this is a packet which never before entered Britany upon such an occasion; for the bishops used to succeed according to their rank, and this year it fell to the lot of M. de Vannes, or M. de Tréguier, who are so much astonished at the proceeding, that they know not what to think; but it is sufficient to be M. de Rennes, who is astonished too, and asks if the packet be really for him; for no one was ever received for a deputation; judge if the governor of Rennes would not have obtained it with more justice. Madame de Chaulnes is so surprised at all this, that she keeps her eyes constantly fixed upon Rome, and is much in the right. The king said to her last week; "M. de Chaulnes was not long at Rome, madam, before he made himself talked of; he has found again good friends there, and has been very well received." "Sire," she replied, "he that bears your majesty's orders, is always well received." The whole court was ready to overwhelm her with compliments and professions of friendship; I hope you have written to her. I am of your opinion, my dear child, that M. de Chaulnes will remain there for another conclave, or rather to settle with the pope, who loves him, the principal objects they have to confer upon together, and those he intends to dispose him to approve or confirm for the general tranquility; this would be a fine stroke; and if madame de Chaulnes and madame de Carman were at Rome, they would be proper seconds to him. But the new pope hates cardinal d'Estrées as much as he loves the ambassador, and it is thought his eminence will return to France; if so, madame de Chaulnes's departure will be deferred. I am as much grieved as you, that the last pope, who

suffered us to remain in possession of Avignon, did not live as long as M. d'Arles*; such longevity would have been fortunate indeed for you, but it was not the will of God. I informed you that M. de Chaulnes entered Rome like an ambassador, *al dispetto* (in spite) of the Spanish ambassador, who endeavoured to prevail on the cardinals to prevent it; but out of fifty-six votes, he had but five †.

I do not give mine to M. de la Garde, either to preach or scold; I know very well, that Jesus Christ, St. Paul, and St. Augustin, preached and exhorted, it was their business; this latter gives good reasons for doing so. But a poor sinner, recovered only three days from a worse state than ours, should keep silence, penetrated with the mercy of God towards him, occupied only with his happiness, and the true gratitude he owes to his Saviour, for having selected and distinguished him from so many others, without any merit, through free grace: such should be the sentiments of his heart, and if charity should make him interest himself for his neighbour, it should display itself in lamentations before God, and in supplicating the same grace for others that has so plentifully been poured upon him. Such was that penitent and holy princess, madame de Longueville; she did not forget her situation, nor the abyss from which God had saved her; she preserved the remembrance as a foundation for her penitence, and her lively acknowledgement to the Almighty. Thus is Christian humility preserved, and the grace of Jesus

* These two prelates lived, the one to the age of ninety-five, the other to eighty-six.

† It is said that M. de Chaulnes had nearly three millions to distribute, to create this pope. D'Avrigny dares not formally deny the fact, which so great a majority, and so speedily obtained, renders very probable. It was money thrown away, or very much like it.

Christ honoured. This does not preclude reflection, and Christian conversation with our friends; but no sermons, no scolding; these revolt, and make us recollect and refer persons to their past life, because we find they have forgotten it. I am astonished that people of good sense should fall into this injustice: but we ought to be astonished at nothing; for what do we not meet with in our journey through life?

It appears that our marquis will soon be in winter-quarters, like the rest, and that he will be able to pay you a visit; I wish it, my dear child; this is the greatest consolation you can have; I have a great desire to embrace him, as well as my dear countess. I am very glad that the count grows fat: he was thin when I saw him, which made me uneasy. The description you give of your storms, is so beautiful and poetic, that it delights my imagination.

LETTER DCCCCXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 6, 1689.

M. DE CHAULNES has written to me very affectionately and pleasantly; he says that he might boast of the brilliancy of his negociation, if it were not for the grief he feels at having been compelled to offer the pope the charming county of Avignon; that he did it with so ill a grace, that he thought his holiness would refuse it, but that he was unfortunate enough to be deceived, and that, on the contrary, the pope received it with such pleasure, as renewed the good opinion he already had of this present. At length, my child, the deed is done; *God gave it you, and God has taken it away from you*; we must bear up against this loss,

as well as against many others. I must tell you once more, that, if you are just, you will agree that the duke has not deceived us. He told us before the last meeting of the states, that things had changed, that he had no longer the same power as formerly, and that it was necessary to appear a little at court; I have told you what he founded his hope upon latterly; he had some reason to believe that, at least this year, his solicitation would have as much weight as another person's. He spoke in this style to M. de Rennes when he passed through Malicorne; I cannot doubt of his desire to oblige me and my son, though he did not think it proper to talk of Britany at Versailles; he spoke to M. de Lavardin, and wrote to marshal d'Estrées; madame de Chaulnes to M. de Croissi; and you know what was done by M. de Cavoie. It is fortunate for the ambassador, that the mortification he must have felt upon this subject, is concealed and lost in his absence, and he has done us equal honour in this country; for every person at Rennes considers my son as the deputy M. de Chaulnes would have appointed; and M. de Coetlogon, as the deputy of his journey to Rome; we have, therefore, no reason to complain, and indeed we are very far from doing so. I must confess, I think it strange that you, the chevalier, and the rest, the great lords and governors of the province, should judge it right that the governor of Britany should be deprived of the noble privilege of appointing deputies independently, and to say that M. de Chaulnes made himself a king; he certainly would have been much to blame not to have done it, as all other governors had done before him. Since the marriage of the duchess Anne with Charles VIII. this fine extensive province had many other privileges. M. de Chaulnes for fifteen or sixteen years followed the steps of marshal de la Meilleraie; do

you think it either noble or just to make a merit of degrading this beautiful government? Is it not the common interest of all great lords and governors? Should they not view themselves in this example? I am acquainted with two or three who have been very sensibly affected at it with regard to themselves, and it cannot be one of this body who has introduced such a revolution. Alas! what do not these poor governors, to please their master? with what joy, with what zeal, do they not fly even to the hospital for his service? Do they consider their health, their pleasure, their lives, as any thing, when obedience to his pleasure is necessary? and yet it is subject of complaint against them to have an honour, a distinction, an opportunity of obliging persons of quality in a province! And why do they wish to be beloved and honoured, and act as kings? is it not for the service of the true king? is it for themselves? Alas! they are so passionately attached to his person, that they only wish to lay aside their fictitious characters, to come and behold him at Versailles, even though they should not themselves be noticed; and shall complaint be made against them for an assumption of grandeur, which they so properly employ? Is it possible, my child, that you should be of a contrary opinion? Come, then, to my assistance, M. de Grignan; support me, it is your business; if you desert me, I shall wish you every possible disgust in Provence, and shall praise and admire those who, by their industry, may find the means of placing you upon the rank of others. I will say no more; why, too, do you make me speak what I think? It is in you, however, that I confide; and besides, I know nothing so good as to understand reason. M. de la Rochefoucault and M. de la Feuillade would not indict me for my sentiments upon this subject.

Let us talk of our states. The Holy Ghost came in

a portmanteau to the council of Trent, says Fra Paolo; so the deputation came in a lettre de cachet to M. de Rennes: these vehicles are equally extraordinary. Marshal d'Estrées will not let my son leave him for a moment; he knows no one but him, speaks to no one but him, and pays his visits in company with him; in short, he is so little acquainted with Britany, that if he had not found a commensal officer of the marchioness d'Huxelles, he would have been very much embarrassed. He keeps a tremendous table, the marshal surpassing M. de Chaulnes; two tables, for eighteen persons each, from morning till night, all served in new, beautiful, gadrooned plate; in short, it is who can spend the most; for there are twenty tables of the same magnitude. The opera of Atys is performed very agreeably, by Menil; and also some plays.

How sorry I am for the chevalier's ill state of health! what a severe fever! Good heavens, how I pity him! He is right not to go to Paris in such a situation; how uncomfortable I should be there, without you and without him! Your stay in Provence has completely fixed mine here. I enclose you letters from madame de la Fayette, and madame de la Lavardin; as to madame de Chaulnes's, it was a volume without end; dwelling upon the conviction that it is her absence that makes me spend the winter at the Rocks instead of Rennes. She places to her own account all that can possibly happen to me there; and was so sincerely disposed to rain upon me a shower of gold, that she was never weary of importuning me to set out; but, my child, this is over; I am very well here, particularly when you are at Grignan.

I am informed that the pope has convened his friends to terminate the affair of the franchises with France and with all the crowned heads; and another congregation to examine the means of making a general peace in

Christendom. It is thought that cardinal d'Estrées will return, and that cardinal de Bouillon will remain for the affairs of France. I am sure the ambassador is not yet ready to return.

Sainte-Marie, my old friend, the king's lieutenant at St. Malo, has been to see me. He told me he had written to you for a vote; pray, satisfy him: he is a man that would go any length to serve me: every body loves him in this country; he is the comfort of all the exiles, of all the prisoners at St. Malo; in short, he is a little Artagnan, faithful to his prince, and humane to those whom he is obliged to guard. He has a thousand good qualities, he says he has learned them of me: you recollect how I converted him, by assuring him upon my word and honour that our religion was preferable to Calvin's. I should very much pity M. de la Garde if he had forgotten his first condition, which, like our gratitude to God, should never be separated from Christian humility. M. Nicole is quite divine.

My son still continues at Rennes; his wife takes great pains to amuse me. M. de Lauzun is going to take a romantic voyage to Ireland with six thousand men. Be careful of yourself, my beloved child, and love me with an affection that belongs only to ourselves.

LETTER DCCCCXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 9, 1680.

M. d'Arles, then, has passed through the midst of the fires of Tasso, of the gigantic phantoms, of the armed men, for all these defended the passage*; and has

* See Canto III. of Tasso's Jerusalem.

Madame de Sevigné's imagination was so lively, her wit so just, and

found nothing but dry and barren heaths. I was in hopes to have found wood enough for our last floor, and that M. d'Arles would thus see his apartment habitable, and M. de Grignan no longer be compelled to go up into the gutters, the impropriety of which I thought he had long been convinced of. In this way, my dear, all would have been finished; but how can M. de Carcassonne resist M. d'Arles's vivacity, who seizes upon the hare, saying, "Give me four thousand crowns, and go to sleep again, and let me alone?" For my part, I really think he is in a lethargy; a thick vapour prevents his answering a syllable to such forcible reasons, and he must be shook again, and tormented still more, to awake him. I suppose that M. d'Arles will receive my letter at Grignan: will he answer easily on the subject of the noble pride for which I blame him, and which makes him feel personally a preference of seats, that relates only to his benefice, and which as little disgraces the abbé de Grignan, as it honours the abbé de Cosnac? In short, my child, these are flights of imagination that cannot be suppressed.

I thought your letter to M. de Chaulnes an excellent one; he pays you with good sense, and you find he did all he could. Madame de Chaulnes has sent me a little account, which she says is only for myself, of a conversation between the ambassador and the pope; I find in the holy father's answer, a great degree of presence of mind, and a vivacity which surprised me, and which plainly show that he possesses all his faculties, and is long-lived. I send it you, as you may perhaps be

so ornamented, that the excellent use she made of what she read is not at all surprising. But it is extraordinary, that a mother like her, should be certain of finding in a daughter worthy of herself, as much wit and taste, as were necessary to comprehend perfectly all the delicacy of her applications.

pleased to see it. The duchess says she hopes you will pardon her husband the injury he has done you, and that the armies are preparing to send you back your son. She sympathizes in the grief of madame de Soubise, who has lost her son *, after incredible sufferings, and in that of madame de Guénégaud, who has not only lost her youngest son at Bonn, but her eldest, whom she loved dearer than her life; she has now no children left but the abbé de Guénégaud, and another, who is also a priest; thus our foresight into futurity often affords us only useless anxiety, because God is preparing for us other troubles.

I dread to mention to you the magnificence of Rennes, lest it should give you an indigestion, for there is nothing but festivity going on; they dine with M. de la Trémouille, and sup with the first president; or dine with M. de Pommereuil, and sup with M. de Rennes; then dine with M. de Coëtlogon, and sup with M. de Malo; thus it is every succeeding day. How does this agree with you? There are twenty tables equally elegant; *Thou devourest all my goods* †. My son informs his wife, I suppose from civility, unwilling to believe that it is upon my account she is here, that her absence is much lamented by all her friends, and that he is very sorry her delicate lungs should prevent her from entering into all these amusements. She answers him angrily, that she is offended at such language; that she did not come here on account of her health; that she knows the life that is led during the sitting of the states; that it was solely for the pleasure of being with me, which she prefers to every thing else; that if her lungs

* Louis prince de Rohan, colonel of a regiment of cavalry, died November 3, of a wound he received July 5, near the camp of Leauvres in Flanders.

† A saying of Harpagon to Maître Jacques, in Molière's Miser.

were equal to the best chairman's in Rennes, she would do the same; and all this so naturally, that I am obliged to her for it, without having the least scruple at seeing her here. We read a good deal, and the time passes away so swiftly, that it is not worth while to be out of patience, except that I cannot embrace you; for this, I must own, I ardently long for. Adieu: with us it is the finest weather in the world, and I dare say, with you it is still finer; it is St. Martin's summer with us, and the dog-days with you. I embrace, and kiss my beloved child on both cheeks.

LETTER DCCCCXLV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 13, 1689.

Your letter is not yet arrived, this is always a grief to me; though I have in some degree got the better of the apprehensions I formerly suffered from the delay: it is the whim of the post, and we must endure it; but as I am constantly with you at Grignan, I *lose* the thread of the conversation; this it is that vexes me. I know not whether you go to the assembly with M. de Grignan, or remain at your château. I am very uneasy about the chevalier's health, and the effects of the bark, repeated in its usual dose: its heat operating upon that of the chevalier's blood, brings to my mind an old saying, *When the brave meets the brave, they remain brave.* We hope, therefore, that this brave bark will make the blood remain brave: God grant it may; it is very difficult to subdue.

Tell me what you have done with madame de Reinié; does she still overwhelm you with her torrent of words? by what means have you silenced her? I will not slacken

the reins to tell you of my affectionate and strong regard for you, and the lively interest I take in what concerns you far or near; as all this holds the first rank in what is dear and precious to me, I place it far above my own little affairs, which appear like hyssop compared with your tall cedars. How can I help entering into all you say respecting the journey to Paris, for the proposal of which you envy my friends? I had great fortitude in resisting when you were at Grignan; had you been at Paris, their great efforts would have been superfluous; I feel that you would have destroyed all my measures: but having concerted them so well with yours, it was not easy to put me out of my way. Thus, my dear child, I maintain myself, thus I subsist; I would not mention this to you, and yet I cannot avoid it, considering you as the sole charm and consolation of my latter days, God and his providence excepted. I am informed of the death of that good and worthy man, the bishop of Nimes; so that our poor Livri is again to be given away; I wish the abbé Pelletier may obtain it.

I have received a long letter from my new friend, the *man-wolf* Guékriac *; I would have sent it to you, as his style, which is very easy, would be agreeable enough, if he did not praise me so extravagantly; in fact, my modesty will not suffer it: he is so astonished to find a woman with a few good qualities and good principles, who in her youth had some charms, that he seems to have passed his life in a whirlwind of passions, among a banditti equally devoid of faith and law, where love reigned alone, despoiled of every kind of virtue; this has given rise to some very pleasant things. He demands my protection with you, in the name of M.

* See Letter of 22 September.

Descartes, to instruct him properly with regard to the Court of Love *, which he had heard spoken of, and considered as a fable. He is like a cabinet-article, a great curiosity; he wants to know the truth from the governess of Provence, and whether upon complaint to that court, if judgement were pronounced, it would be by female judges: you have some wits from Arles, and a prior from St. John at Aix (am I not right?), who will give you the necessary information. Guébriac found the enclosed sheet by way of preface to a book of Francis Barberin's †, who makes mention of it: I send it to Paulmie, she will understand this prose as well as *il Pastor fido*. This is a trifle you will intrust some one with, and not trouble yourself about it. Were you at Aix, Montreuil would settle this affair for his old friend, whose mind is very different from his: but, in short, you will do what you can without incommoding yourself.

The handsome abbé de Rohan ‡, so beautiful, and indeed too beautiful, is at present at the head of M. de Soubize's household, and his livings are given to his

* The Court of Love was nothing more than a society of wits of both sexes, which was instituted in Provence towards the close of the 11th century. They communicated to each other their works, and conversed upon different subjects, in which love had always some share. The quarrels and jealousies of lovers were the common objects of their discussion; they determined the merits of the canons written upon this subject; the canons were a kind of poetry which the troubadours or trouvères had brought into reputation, in which were treated curious questions of love and lovers. Martial of Auvergne afterwards gave a collection of these judgements, entitled *Arrets Amoureux*, and upon which Benoît le Court, a famous lawyer, published in 1599 a learned Latin commentary.

† See Bayle's Dictionary, under the article *Barberin*.

‡ Hercules-Mériadec, prince and duke de Rohan, became the elder by the death of Louis prince de Rohan, his brother.

younger brother*. Our states broke up yesterday, he will himself send you the news. The marshal's expense was ridiculously extravagant; he had every day sixty guests to dine and sup with him, and every thing was served with such magnificence as eclipsed M. de Chaulnes, who indeed would have been sorry to vie with him. Adieu, my beloved child; this is enough for to-day. How is your health in detail? your side, your colic? send me a little *gazette*: mine is still like the last. My daughter-in-law embraces you, and continues her attentions to me.

LETTER DCCCCXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 16, 1689.

Your letters are both arrived; that of the 3d travelled to Rennes without knowing why; the fault was occasioned at Paris; I received it on Sunday, after having sent away my letters. I will begin by entering upon the motion that agitates you all, and very reasonably, to know if madame de Maison's compliment is well grounded: she has frequently told us very unwelcome news, and sometimes very good: but when we hope to hear that the chevalier's regiment will devolve to his nephew, it is so natural and easy to believe it, that we must commit violence upon ourselves to doubt it; and you that are so skilful in raising phantoms, will find some difficulty to find subjects of despair upon an occasion where every thing is in favour of the marquis; example, name, his father's and his uncle's merit, and his

* Armand Gaston Maximilian de Rohan, afterwards bishop of Strasburgh, cardinal and great almoner of France.

own: all these place him at the head of this fine troop. You cannot doubt, my child, that I am like you in every thing that concerns you; you cannot talk to me too long, nor repeat your thoughts to me too often; I enter into all your arguments *pro* and *con*, and into the dialogue of Fear and Hope: I therefore wait like you with all the impatience excited by real and affectionate friendship.

I now know what has happened to the mill-clack, madame Reinié. I know that you have resolved to go to the assembly, and afterwards to return to Grignan. I am informed of the state of the chevalier's health, whose pardon I ask for not agreeing with him respecting M. d'Arles's resignation. I would have made the most of this *second* place to the king, which I should have made him understand I filled only for his service; but, at the bottom, I would not have cared about it; I should have been delighted to have kept it, and served my elder brother. The more I felt myself a Grignan, and superior to M. d'Aix in every other respect, the more indifferent I should have been to that short meeting of the assembly, where the prerogative of one archbishopric over another constitutes the difference upon this occasion only *. I own to you, in short, that this is my feeling, and I thought, from his rank and elevated sentiments, that it would have been the chevalier's also: I have been mistaken; but, much as I esteem his good sense, I shall not change my opinion. On the other hand, I praise the archbishop for having the courage to finish his building, and I admire him for having obtained 4000 crowns from M. de Carcassonne.

* The archbishop of Aix is the first attorney, by birth, of the county of Provence; and in this capacity he always presides at the assembly of the states, which are held every year at Lambesc, a town three leagues distant from Aix.

Your sister-in-law desires me to tell you she thinks herself fortunate in having been able to please you, as she did by following her own inclination. You very much increase the pleasure she feels in doing what she calls her duty, by your approbation. She has scarcely felt her husband's absence; he was so near her, she so often heard from him, was so certain he would soon return, that no mortification intruded to disturb her amiable conduct. You speak of all this so affectionately and sincerely, that you renew my love by it.

Your county then is given up. I wish the principality of Orange, which is so freely surrendered to the king, could recompense you for your loss; but it has long been in your government without your being the better for it. I am delighted that you have written to madame de Chaulnes. Do you not like the little conversation she sent me, and which I sent to you? I am told Coulanges is a favourite with the pope, that M. de Chaulnes has bespoken a state-coach, and keeps a table as he did in Britany; this looks like being settled. By the by, our states broke up on Monday last, they have granted 10,000 crowns to marshal d'Estrées; he has spent that sum, and more. The deputies are M. de Rennes *, and M. de Coetlogon, the rest are not worth the honour of being named. Your brother will be here to-morrow; he brings with him the abbé Charier, and my farmer of Buron, who is a stout gentleman, madame de Marbeuf, and some others; we fear more from so much company than from our solitude. My son certainly often takes the liberty of quoting the good brothers, who order separate beds in the dog-days; romances are rational compared to this silly book. I shall say nothing of Paulina's taste for romances; I

* John Baptist de Beaumont, bishop of Rennes.

have read them, like many other persons of superior understanding to myself, with so much pleasure, that I must be silent. Examples might be given of the good and bad effects produced by these books; you do not like them, and you have conducted yourself well; I liked them, and they have done me no harm. "To the pure, all things are pure," as you say. I, who chose to support my taste, thought that a young man became generous and brave in viewing my heroes; and a young woman wise and discreet in reading Cleopatra. There are people who sometimes take things wrong; but they would not act better, perhaps, if they could not read; it is essential to have the mind well disposed, and then it is not easily warped: madame de la Fayette is another instance in my favour. It is, however, very true and very certain, that M. Nicole's works are preferable; you are charmed with them; this may serve as a panegyric to the book: what I read of it at madame de Coulanges's, easily convinces me that it must please you. You will be very happy, and very enviable, if God has made use of this delightful book to inspire you with his love. I, at least, derive this good from it, that I am persuaded it is the only truly desirable object in the world. Upon this ground, I conjure you, my dear Paulina, not to let your mind turn towards frivolous things, but to attach yourself to what is solid, in which class I place history; your taste will otherwise be of a pale hue. We are reading the History of the Church by M. de Gadeau *; it is really a very fine work; in what a respectable light does it place religion! we are ready to suffer martyrdom with Abbadie. Every thing has its turn; Corisca is very pretty and very roguish: *altri tempi, altre cure.* Love me always, my dear child,

* Anthony Godeau, bishop of Grasse and Vence.

but never weigh other love in the same scale with yours; your heart is of the first order, and no one resembles it.

LETTER DCCCCXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 20, 1689.

You have relieved me from great anxiety, by telling me that our marquis is colonel of his uncle's fine regiment; nothing could be more advantageous to him; it is scarcely possible to be promoted higher at the age of eighteen. Now your uneasiness is at an end, and the dialogue of Hope and Fear happily concluded. I defy you, with all your ingenuity, to discover any disagreeable circumstance attending this affair; there is now nothing more to be considered, my dear countess, than to support this rank, which necessarily creates a greater expense than that of captain. The chevalier must be paid—how much? It is to be hoped that you will have permission to sell your fine company, the work of your own hands. In short, good and evil are blended; honours increase expence; we are sorry when they are not obtained, and embarrassed when they are; such is the world. Will not your colonel pay you a visit? I should think he would have time enough. I have a great inclination to write to him, and superscribe his letter according to my fancy. You have, then, generally a hundred persons at Grignan, and eighty is your least number. I find they are not very scrupulous about burthening you. I approve of your not going to Lambese, to expose your beauty and Paulina's youth to the fury of the small-pox: this is an evil we cannot too carefully avoid. You have given me such

a dreadful idea of the north-wind of Grignan during the winter, that it terrifies me. I suppose M. de Grignan will find it difficult to resolve not to pass these three months at the good city of Aix; we must sometimes yield to impossibilities, but it is a painful reflection; and it is a great misfortune to find ourselves exhausted, when it is so necessary to be otherwise: these are very sensible objects, in regard to which, I wish you, as well as myself, all requisite fortitude. The chevalier will communicate some of his to you: he has so great a portion, of the use of which he is deprived by the gout, that he has some to spare, and should supply his friends with it. Never fail to inform me of his and your plans. Madame de Chaulnes tells me, that she has received a very charming letter from you. Madame de Lavardin was in great affliction, M. de Chalons dying, and his pious mother* overwhelmed with grief at the foot of the cross. M. de Senlis† and all the Sanguins are very joyous; they have obtained our little abbey (of Livri), and have given up a priory to be free of the pension. It is so agreeable to them, that it seems nearer to me than if it had been given to another; they are all our old neighbours.

My son is at length returned from the states, and is very well pleased to be with us; madame de Marbeuf is here for a short time, and the abbé de Quimperlé (Charier) who thinks of nothing but serving me. We expect our farmer, with whom we are to settle a long account without money. The count d'Estrées‡ supped

* Louise Boyer, duchess of Noailles, mother of Louis Antoine de Noailles, bishop of Chalons upon Marne, afterwards archbishop and cardinal of Paris.

† Denis Sanguin, bishop of Senlis.

‡ Victor Marie, count (afterwards duke) d'Estrées, vice-admiral and marshal of France.

and slept here last night, and set out this morning for Paris; I found him very agreeable and lively. He has a fine mind, and so attached to the sciences, and what is called the belles-lettres, that if he had not acquired a very good reputation both by sea and land (as the chevalier can inform you), I should imagine him to be one of those whose talents are an obstacle to their fortune; but he knows very well how to make them agree, at the expense of his rest, indeed, for he spends whole nights in reading, which is too much. I wish our marquis had only a half of this disposition; it would be sufficient. It was a pleasure to hear him converse with my son, upon ancient and modern poets, history, philosophy, morality; he is acquainted with every thing, no subject comes amiss to him; this is delightful. The ignoramuses were quite in the back ground; and the G***s, with the counts de R**** and de R****, and their good things, had nothing to say; we were very merry at their expense. Madame de Marbeuf sends you a thousand affectionate compliments; and the abbé Chartier sends you ten thousand respectful ones. Your M. d'Aix has an abbey worth 6000 livres a year, which belonged to the abbé de Soubise; he will tell you it is worth twelve, but you may abate one half. I take my leave, my beloved child; your brother is disposed to write to you. Send me the *gazette* of your health; this is the source of my repose, as you say the fountain of youth with me would be the source of yours; this is an idea which I consider as worthy of your friendship.

LETTER DCCCCXLVIII.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 20, 1689.

HERE I am once more, my beautiful little sister, with our dear mamma, delighted to find her in perfect health, delighted to find myself in repose at the Rocks, and out of the phrensy of the states, and delighted to renew my correspondence with you. My mother has preserved all your letters, which have still to me the charms of novelty, so that it is only since yesterday, that I have been informed of all you have said respecting me. I shall neither compliment nor thank you for what you have written to my mother and to me, as you know how sensible I am to the testimonies of your friendship. I was soon consoled at not having the deputation, when I perceived I had not been deserted by M. de Chaulnes, as I had imagined. You know that I always complain of crosses; those which have befallen me this year, were of a nature which it was impossible to foresee; for it is certain that out of the three powerful men in the province, there was not one who was not strenuously my friend, and whose interest was not connected with mine with regard to the deputation; so that it was much more their business than mine to effect it. M. de Chaulnes, marshal d'Estrées, and M. de Lavardin, are equally opponents to M. de Seignelai, M. de Caroie, and M. de Coetlogon; and were all disposed to deprive their antagonists of the satisfaction of appointing a deputy, and to have one of their own nomination. I was the only one they all had in view, and it was, in fact, their intention to appoint me. Marshal d'Estrées entertained hopes as long as he could; he at length received the

mandate he so much dreaded, and which had been nevertheless determined upon four months before, as I have since been informed. You judge rightly that, being upon such terms with him, nothing unpleasant could happen to me during the sitting of the states; I tell you this in confidence, for it would not be proper to publish marshal d'Estrées's earnest desire that M. de Seignelai and the friends of this minister should not succeed upon this occasion, though every one is acquainted with the misunderstanding that subsists between them.

I am very happy to find that I shall soon be uncle to a colonel, and, perhaps, ere long great-uncle; not indeed to an officer of such high rank; but I shall console myself for this, as the affront cannot be given to me without your sharing in it. Adieu, my very beautiful little sister; I am going to resume my usual avocations with my mother, amusing her by reading history, and taking care of her health; and I shall not, in your opinion, have much merit, for the short time she stays, considering how well she is at present.

LETTER DCCCCXLIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 23, 1689.

How delighted I am, my dear child, that you have taken a little trip to Livri*! You have so often celebrated this festival there, that if you had met me, you would not have thought any change had taken place, not even among the Sanguins, whom we have so often seen there, and who are now masters of it, and all our old furniture devolved from abbé to abbé, and which will

* Madame de Grignan imagined she would be there upon St. Mar-

long continue in the state you have seen them, for this abbey is going to be settled as a patrimony in the family. You have charming weather, and so have we; fine sunshine, mild air: madame de Marbeuf cannot help walking, though she is not so strong as I am. The abbé Charier and I have been these two days settling with the farmer; he is a very honest man; but as his predecessor destroyed our estate, nothing but repairs and drawbacks stare us in the face, and I shall not receive a farthing of the thousand pistoles he owes me, as the produce has been applied for the last two years to restoring order; these are strange accounts; but let this console you, as it does me, it will be better in future. I highly approve of your having avoided Lambese, the air being infected with the small-pox, a disorder the most carefully to be avoided. I shall not be surprised if the chevalier, with his complaints, to which the air of Paris is so fatal, should take advantage of the opportunity of spending a winter in your mild climate, now he is there; I should rather be astonished, if, finding himself better after using the waters of Balaruc, he did not ensure the success of those baths, by the temperature of the climate, which affords relief to all gouty patients; so that I am very far from thinking he intends to leave you alone.

I have received compliments from the abbé Bigorre on the marquis's having obtained a regiment. I have just written to the young colonel, and the composition of this letter certainly gave me less trouble than your answer to madame de Vaudemont gave you: if absence, joined to a still farther separation, has doubled and increased the pomp of your gallimatia, you have great reason to be out of breath, to wipe your face, and cry *halt*, like M. de la Souche; but you would not be the only one

who would have occasion to wipe his face, in attempting to understand you*: I say this in jest, for God always bestowed on me sufficient grace to understand you perfectly. You amuse yourself with building and finishing all your apartments, that are so commodious and so different from the other pompous, ill-finished buildings; there is much more reason in what you are doing. You ask me what books we are reading. When we have company, reading is laid aside; but before the meeting of the states, we read some little books that scarcely took us up a moment:—Mahomet II., who took Constantinople from the last emperor of the East; this is a great event, so singular, brilliant, and extraordinary, that we are carried away with it; and it happened but two hundred and thirty-six years ago:—the Conspiracy of Portugal, which is very fine: the Variations of M. de Meaux: a volume of the History of the Church, the second is too full of the detail of the councils, and therefore might be tedious: *les Iconoclastes* and the Arianism of Mainbourg; this author is detestable, his style disagreeable; he is always desirous of being satirical, and compares Arius, a princess, and a courtier, to M. Arnauld, madame de Longueville, and Treville: but setting aside these fooleries, the historical passages are so very fine, the council of Nice so admirable, that it is read with pleasure; and as he brings us down to Theodosius, we shall find consolation for all our evils in the elegant style of M. de Flechier†. We skim over other

* Madame de Sevigné here ridicules letters that are too elaborately written, too much studied, and therefore affected; what would she not have said, could she have foreseen the time when all the various styles furnished frequent examples of this very defect, and, by aiming at wit and novelty, pains were taken to become unintelligible?

† Esprit Flechier, bishop of Nimes, author of the Life of Theodosius.

books: we have once more dipped into the Abbadie, and we shall resume it again with my son, who reads it admirably; thus, my dear child, the time glides away but too swiftly; it is at present an object of great importance to me. If I had found out *the source of your repose* (I never met with so pretty an expression), if I had found it, I should be a prodigal of time, as formerly. I am more grieved at the time you have lost in losing the county; I had hoped it would remain with you much longer; this, as you say, was a *source of justice;* I wish it had depended upon the health of the present pope, for nothing is talked of but the soundness of his constitution and his activity.

I have read at intervals the Life of the Duke d'Epernon, which has highly amused me. You must tell me some Lambese news; alas! will not poor madame du Janet be very much grieved? why did not her husband remain peaceably with her? what did he intend to do *in that cursed galley?* The life of man is a mere trifle, it is soon over; in all these histories it passes so swiftly, few of the heroes live to my age! *but no more of that,* the reflection is sufficient. My son, his dear wife, and madame Marbeuf, send you a thousand remembrances; the abbé Charier a thousand compliments. I am much obliged to this abbé; he takes upon him all my business of Lower Britany, which is not inconsiderable, and which I could not have done at Paris; and after all this, my child, I only ask the happiness of seeing you again, and embracing you with my whole heart.

LETTER DCCCCI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, November 27, 1689.

I HAVE not received your letter; these delays mortify, but do not now alarm me; I am accustomed to the caprices of the post. I am quite of M. de Courtin's opinion; your presence would be very necessary at court for your son; nothing is so certain, and this is one of the reasons that make us murmur against impossibilities; this is the cause of all obstacles and of all disasters. Do you recollect when we used sometimes to say, there is nothing so ruinous as the want of money? we perfectly understood each other. But will not the little colonel pay you a visit? what can prevent him, after having returned thanks, and paid his court for a short time? I expect to hear from you upon this subject; you can never enter too fully into every thing that concerns you; it is my true interest.

I should also be glad to hear some Lambesc news, and what humiliation M. d'Arles has suffered from the wooden arm upon his seat, which did not appear to me to touch him; I am still of the same opinion. I forgot on Wednesday to enclose a note of condolence, which I had written for poor madame du Janet. I have sent it to Paris, and you will receive it by way of Poirier; I find I have some feelings for Provence, which lead me to believe that I shall some day return thither. Madame de la Fayette informs me of the preparations she is making for her son's nuptials. She has converted her little chamber into a cabinet, she has given me an idea of it, give me one of you; I know not what you, or

Paulina wears; if I were to see you pass, I should not know you.

We are reading the Life of Theodosius; my son increases its value by his manner of reading it; it is really the finest piece of writing I ever met with; the style is admirable; but such a book lasts us only two days; I had read it, and yet it was new to me. I should be sorry, for instance, if Paulina had no taste for history; romances should only be foils to such productions, otherwise they are pernicious. Madame de Marbeuf accommodates herself to our reading; and we accommodate ourselves to her card-table, when there are performers: she is a worthy, generous woman, who is capable of loving, and who adores you. The abbé Charier is gone for a few days to a living he has near Vitré; I really sometimes admire the goodness of Providence towards me; he is so necessary to me in the business I have to transact in Lower Britany, that if he were at present at Lyons, as he ought naturally to be, I know not what I should do.

Madame de Chaulnes has received a brief from her friend the pope, conceived in the most obliging terms possible. Popes do not usually allow that they are indebted for their exaltation to any one; but you will find that his present holiness does not hesitate to say that he owes it to the ambassador according to the king's intentions. I enclose you a copy of this brief; my son says it is badly translated, but the sense is good. The abbé Bigorre has sent me the holy father's picture; I doubt not that he will send you one also; his countenance promises longevity. If Avignon had been held upon his life, it would have remained with us a considerable time; but that *churl* to die at the end of the first year! you, however, made so good a use of that *source of all justice*, that I thought heaven would preserve it

for you; but we are not acquainted with the secrets of that country; the only certainty is, that we must submit to them. Coulanges paid his compliments to the pope in Italian: he was in the circle of the first audience, when the ambassador was accompanied through the streets by fifty coaches, and a great crowd of people; it was a very fine sight, and after having received from the pope every paternal attention in public, he was shut up with his holiness two hours in his closet; what passed is still a secret. Coulanges then paid his short compliment, the holy father answered with much good humour and politeness; he told him he had heard of madame de Coulanges, and that she must come to Rome with madame de Chaulnes; this will not be forgotten. A pretty girl said a ridiculous thing the other day at Rennes, very much in the style of madame de Coulanges's epigrams. You know M. de la Tremouille with his fine figure and plain face; he was looking at another lady, to whom he was playing off the lover, and turned his back upon her; instead of being embarrassed, she said with great sprightliness, "*It is certainly to me he is making love.*" Is not this madame de Coulanges herself? But such sallies are agreeable every where, when they are natural. These are trifles, indeed, my dear child; we might enter upon more serious subjects; but they would be melancholy, and we are very distant from each other: you know how sensibly they affect me; this is enough for a day in which I have nothing to answer. Inform me what the major-generals sell their regiments for. Adieu, my best and dearest child; tell me a few particulars of your health in the gazette style; for you have countries, alas! which were formerly much ravaged; give me some account of them; I cannot reflect upon former times without emotion, and gratitude to God.

LETTER DCCCCLI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, November 30, 1689.

How much I am obliged to you for having sent me M. de Saint Pouanges's letter! It is a pleasure to see, really to see, an attestation of the wisdom and merit of our marquis, formed expressly for this age; you are not forgotten in it: I am delighted at having read this letter, and I return it you with a thousand thanks. I have no doubt that you will be allowed to sell the marquis's company, and I wait for this joyful event.

I always interest myself in what concerns the chevalier; not because he amuses himself with reading and liking my letters; on the contrary, I take the liberty of laughing at him for this; but because his head is very well turned, and agrees wonderfully well with his heart: but how is it, since he is fond of this kind of reading, that he does not give himself the pleasure of perusing your letters before you send them? They are truly worthy of his attention. When I show them to my son and his wife, we feel their beauty. My friend Guébriac saw the passage respecting La Montbrun the other day; it very much surprised him; it was a lively and amusing picture. In short, my child, it is fortunate that my letters please you; how often otherwise would you be tired! M. de Grignan has not then lent me his assistance in that, where I spoke of the masterly stroke of having deprived the pope-maker of the nomination of deputies for the governor of Britany. I am sure that neither the chevalier nor you could fail to be convinced of the truth of what I said: that blood which circulates so warmly in the chevalier's veins, could not be frozen with regard to

the interests of great lords and governors of provinces. I also hope that he has adopted my sentiments upon the ill-judged pride of the archbishopric of Arles, for the archbishop is out of the question; but I perhaps flatter myself in vain upon these occasions: I should, however, like this ingenuousness, if united to so many good things; and, if it were in my favour, I should be quite proud of it. Let us now talk of his gout and fever; they seem to reign alternately, the gout in the room of fever, the fever in the room of gout; he may choose; and I am of your opinion, that the reigning power is always the most disagreeable; in short, it is a great misfortune that such a man should be obliged to keep his bed.

So then you were struck with an expression of madame de la Fayette's, blended with so much friendship*. Though I say to myself that this is a truth which should not be forgotten, I confess I was all astonishment at it; for I yet feel no sort of decay that puts me in mind of it. I cannot, however, refrain from calculating and reflecting, and I find that the conditions of life are very hard. It seems to me that I have been dragged against my will to the fatal period, when *old age* must be endured; I see it, I have attained it; and I would, at least, contrive not to go beyond it, not to advance in the road of infirmities, pain, loss of memory, *disfigurements* which are ready to lay hold of me; and I hear a voice which says, You must go on, in spite of yourself; or, if you will not, you must die, an alternative at which nature recoils. Such, however, is the fate of those who have reached a certain period: but a return to the will of God, and to that universal law which is

* This expression was, "You are old." See the letter of the 6th October.

imposed upon us, restores reason to its place, and makes us call in patience to our aid: summon it also, my dearest child; and let not your too affectionate heart excite you to shed tears which reason must condemn.

I had no great difficulty in refusing the offers of my friends; I had only to answer them, *Paris is in Provence*, as you said, *Paris is in Britany*; but it is extraordinary that you should feel it in the same way I did. Paris, then, is so truly in Provence with respect to me, that I would not this year be any where else than where I am. *Passing the winter at the Rocks* sounds terrific: alas! my child, it is the most agreeable thing in the world; I sometimes laugh, and say, This, then, is what is called passing a winter in the woods. Madame de Coulanges said to me, the other day, Leave your *damp* Rocks! *Damp!* I replied: you are damp, if you please; Brévanes is damp, but we are upon an eminence; you might as well say, Your damp Montmartre. When the sun shines, it penetrates on every side into these woods; it is a dry soil, exposed to the direct rays of the meridian sun, so that the most delicate constitution could not take cold; and the setting sun has a fine effect from the end of a long grove: when it rains, we have a good room, a good fire, and two card-tables: this is now the case, as we have a good deal of company, who do not interrupt me, for I do as I please; when we have none, we are still better off, as reading affords a pleasure superior to every other. Madame de Marbeuf is very good; she enters into our taste; but she will not always be with us. I wished to tell you this, that your friendship might be at rest.

My daughter-in-law is delighted with what you say of her; I make no secret of it, and she desires me to say every thing that is kind and grateful, in return for the praises you bestow on her. M. Courtin's friendship

for you, claims many from me; he is an important friend, and not afraid of speaking in your behalf; but this is not a very proper time to request favours and gratifications, when considerable augmentations are asked on every side. Tell me what pensions are retrenched; not, I trust, M. de Grignan's, or a Menin's? If so, I shall be in despair. You will see M. du Plessis; he has written to me, and gives me to understand that his domestic plan does not succeed; and that instead of being comfortable and independent, as he expected, he has thought of nothing but quitting his house; so that he will be with M. de Vins, in Provence, for two months. He will relate his griefs to you; he seems to have been taken in with respect to interest; I am very sorry for it; tell me what you learn from him. You certainly ought to send me M. de Grignan's speech; as he is satisfied with it, I shall be still more so. Tell him how I summoned him to my aid, and upon what occasion. You spare me very much in your letters, I am aware of it; you pass slightly over things that are unpleasant, but I feel them as much as you do. It is a great comfort that the chevalier is with you; he is the only person in whom you can confide, and the only one that can be more affected than yourself at what concerns you; he knows how worthy I am to talk with him upon this subject: we are so much in the same interest, that a natural union must necessarily subsist between us. A thousand kindnesses to my dear Paulina; I have a very good opinion of her little sprightliness, and her curtseys: you love her, you amuse yourself with her; this delights me; she answers your questions very humorously. Good heavens! my dear child, when will the time come that I shall see and embrace you, and that dear child also? I long for this period; I will inform you of the first prospect I have of it.

LETTER DCCCCLII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 4, 1689.

I THANK you for your letter of the 24th of November; it is full of confidence and friendship, and informs me of what I wished to know. I told you that I showed my son only such letters as I chose he should see; this is certainly one of the number. We had some sensible people here the other day, who, on reading what relates to your son's regiment, in the gazette, immediately exclaimed that the young colonel would be of no expense to his father and mother; and that his two uncles, who were such great lords, would certainly support him. I could not help shrugging my shoulders internally, and left them to think as they pleased. You cannot surprise me in speaking of the chevalier's friendship and kindness; they are great indeed: it is he, I find, who wishes to furnish you with the means of paying him; this is a singular stratagem; but the difficulty consists in finding the money, though the security is good. Why could not M. de la Garde procure you this trifling sum? I find fault with every one; no one exerts himself sufficiently. Would to God I were possessed of a small transferable sum! I would soon send it to you; but I have nothing but vile lands that produce stones instead of bread. I am, therefore, good for nothing but to talk, to find fault with what is amiss, to pity you, and feel keenly your misfortunes; alas! you see the rest; *and yet you see nothing, neither do I.* I conjure you to let me know the sequel of these important and urgent affairs: be not afraid of afflicting me; my sorrow is

greater when I suffer alone, and am only informed of things generally. Your assembly, I find, is to sit only a fortnight, and our states three weeks: their sittings will hereafter be still shorter, for the only object now is the free gift. M. d'Aix ought to be satisfied that M. d'Arles has resigned his place to him: can this be called pride? It is so, however, and is highly gratifying to the archbishop of Aix. These two prides, one of whom remains, and the other who goes away, will agree very well together. If M. d'Arles thinks he has caught M. d'Aix, he will be sure of success, for he always confounds his enemies upon these terms. I know not whether I shall be in a humour to write to M. d'Aix upon this abbey; it is not better than my compliment. Tell me all that follows; and when you have found money to pay the chevalier out of his own estate—ah, how easy it is to comprehend this feeling! I am not over-much pleased with the prudent La Garde; I do not find that generosity and gratitude are virtues he much practises; I wish they had their turn with the rest. Let me know when you have leave to sell the marquis's company.

How good it is of you to form Paulina's mind, and to teach her to dance! You will improve her more than Desairs; she has only to look at you, and imitate you. Is she tall? is she graceful? I thank her for not having confounded me with the grandmothers she hates: thank Heaven, I escape! I very much approve the regimen and preservative which she takes, by her confessor's prescription, against the Pastor Fido; it is like the rhubarb and marmalade which I saw madame de Pomponne take before dinner; but she afterwards ate champignons and sallad, and adieu to the marmalade: you, dear Paulina, are to make the application. But do you not adore your dear and excellent mamma? Do you not think

yourself happy in seeing her, looking at her, listening to her, and hearing her? Each of these words has its degree. I know not, my dear child, where M. de Grignan is, or where you are, or where the chevalier is: you talked of a journey to Lambesc; the air of the small-pox always alarms me. Pay my compliments as you can; accept my son's; his wife will not write to you till you have obtained permission to sell your company; she looks to the main chance: she is charmed with your friendship and approbation. Madame de Marbeuf is still here, and the abbé Charier; this is just the company we like: they send you a hundred thousand compliments. We have fine weather, and we walk; I wear your cloak, which I very much like, and it does me both honour and profit; it is admired and praised: *it is a present from my daughter.* Do not imagine that I am in a dark solitary wood, with an owl upon my head; this is not the idea: nothing passes so insensibly as a winter in the country; the prospect of it is worse than the reality. My health is still very good, give me a circumstantial account of yours.

LETTER DCCCCLIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 7, 1689.

I HAVE told you, my dear child, that when once we are settled in the country, the months of November and December are not difficult to pass. Your north wind, however, greatly terrifies me; we have no such tempests here. I would not have you lose any of the good company that is now with you; and I could wish, if the chevalier's health be not restored this winter, that he would spend it with you rather than in his little

chamber at Paris: this would be a comfort to you both. You are resolved then to pass the winter at Grignan, leaving the game to M. d'Aix, and setting forth the reasons which prevent your holding your court at Aix for three or four months, as was customary with M. de Grignan. But do you not hope to see your son this winter? I cannot conceive that any thing can prevent his coming to you. My son and I were admiring, the other day, how you had pushed him forward in life, in order to fix him in the station that was so proper for him, the command of his uncle's regiment: all this has been very happily brought about, and M. de Grignan crowned all in sending him to make the first campaign at Philipsburgh, which cost you so many tears. The academy, the musketeers, and even the company of light horse, could not have advanced him so much as these three sieges with the dauphin, and the contusion so prettily and so coolly received: in short, our utmost wishes have been hitherto accomplished; may God support and conduct the rest.

Madame de Vins has written to me respecting the regiment; like a true friend, she is delighted: she informs me that M. de Vins has taken M. du Plessis with him; this I knew, and told you; you will see him, and he will acquaint you with his grievances. It is easy to see that the poor man has been imposed upon; this is a pity; but marriage should not be engaged in so inconsiderately. The weather has been tremendous for these six days past. There are now two card-tables in my apartment, occupied by madame de Marbeuf, the abbé Charier, and others: this is very well; when they are gone, we shall resume our books with pleasure. My health still continues good, you talk very superficially of yours; how are your spirits, your side, your colic? In short, are you handsome? for that determines all

LETTER DCCCCLIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 11, 1689.

I BEGIN by exclaiming against the *six deniers;* a sum I have never heard mentioned since the loan of the miser in Moliere's play. I suppose you meant to say *six and a half* per cent. which I have heard of in Provence; but the former sum is so usurious, that I do not think a notary would draw up a contract upon such terms: it would be paying 1666 livres 13 sols for 10,000 livres; which is not at all in the usual course of loans: in short, I stand in need of an explanation, for I cannot believe you at the first word. I agree with you in regard to the reasons that urge you more than all the bailiffs in Christendom to pay the chevalier, not only in part, but the two thousand pistoles*; nothing can be more just; I am quite of your opinion.

Like you, I have found all we have thought and felt, with regard to the little abbey, very singular. Such a turn of fancy seldom occurs: you may call it childish weakness, or whatever you please; but it is certain that these Sanguins, this Villeneuve, the idea of old Pavin†, our ancient acquaintances, are so confounded with our garden and forest, that it appears to me like the same thing, and not only as if we had lent it to them, but as if it were still our own, since we are certain of finding our furniture, and the same persons we so frequently

* The price of the regiment.

† Denis Sanguin de Saint-Pavin, one of the most pleasing poets of his time, died in 1670.

saw there. In short, my child, we deserved Livri on account of the love we had, and still have, for that delightful retreat.

You praise me too highly for the quiet life I lead here; nothing gives me pain but your absence. If it be necessary to raise the value of this retreat, to give courage to certain people, I consent; but otherwise, you forget that Paris is in Provence for me, that every thing is equal to me, that I could not pass my time better, and that I do not deserve praise for this journey, but for the one I took when I left you at Paris, and which maternal tenderness and policy, and the last commands of the good abbé, to restore to my son the lands I had enjoyed, compelled me to take, five or six years ago. It was this that gave me real sorrow, because I quitted you; for which I was deservedly punished by a narrow escape from being drowned, and a sore leg. At present, my love, my expenses sleep, or rather slumber, for I have always my house and little household at Paris, and am at some expense here; but all this is so trifling, that I find means to remit some money, which is a relief to my mind, and calls those charming virtues, which you so highly extol, into action. When I have settled, as I hope to do, my affairs in Britany, I shall think of nothing but going to meet you. I shall pass through Paris, which is the theatre of all nations, and perhaps, by that time, you will think of coming thither. In short, we shall see what Providence ordains with respect to our plans; we must do as well as we can till the autumn of 90. The journey of my son and his wife to Bourbon, seems to me like a vision. This, my dear child, is all I can say to you to-day.

The little colonel has written to me, to his uncle, and

his *cousin**, to inform us of his promotion. He had not yet received our congratulatory letter. He owns that he is delighted to find himself at the head of such a handsome troop, and to be able to say, *my regiment;* that this is somewhat juvenile, but he is only eighteen. He tells us how the last years of his life have been hurried on; I would send you this letter, but I like it so much, that I am unwilling to part with it. You seem to be more apprehensive for me, at being the *grandam* of a colonel, than of a captain of cavalry: you carry your affection too far, my dear countess; I have more courage than you have, and I would willingly be so to a married colonel; if he were to have a son by the end of the year, I should be delighted. We should accustom ourselves to think of the worst that can happen; there are some passages in your letters, upon this subject, so affectionate and so natural, that they call forth a gratitude and tenderness that are not easily described; we must say, as you do sometimes, *God knows it.*

I have spoken to you of madame de Coulanges, but what you say is more to the purpose. It is true that this sin of hers will not fail to find indulgence; she will turn this new friend (Alexander VIII.) to whatever purpose she pleases, and he will, for some time, be the *best piece in her purse;* but I give you back your own words, "She is my friend, you know it well; you will not betray me." Madame de la Fayette informs me that madame de Coulanges is in a good road †, and that she will endeavour to get into one also, as soon as her son is married. Tell me, my dear countess, how

* The young marchioness de Sévigné thought herself too little to be called *aunt*.

† That is, that she was becoming religious, by giving a few hours less to the world, and a few more to the church and directors of conscience.

you contrive to pass the winter in your château, upon that mountain, with hurricanes that make one tremble. M. de Grignan will very much regret the loss of madame d'Oppede's charming society. For my part, I sink quietly to the grave, in these woods: I sometimes do not stir out of my room for a whole week. I never think of it when it rains; and when it is fine, it is like summer, on account of the fineness of the soil; for the last two days, the sun has been warm and brilliant; it is very mild; this is the weather in which I walk. At length, you would approve my conduct; what can be more comprehensive than this? For three weeks past we have had very pleasant and accommodating visitors; I mean, the abbé Charier and madame de Marbeuf. They leave us to-morrow: they send you a thousand thousand compliments; I could have wished that you had answered the first, but you did not suppose they would have staid here so long. Cards enliven a house; I fear that yours have cost you some money, as well as M. de Grignan, for I know your ill luck.

I have been much surprised that your province should so considerably have increased its present to the king: when M. de Grignan entered upon his office, it was only a hundred thousand crowns, and after the first year, it was five hundred thousand. We have received an edict from Paris respecting the tontine. The king, the dauphin, and Monsieur, have sent all their plate to the mint, which will produce some millions, and furnish money, which was very much wanted. You calculate in the midst of your disorder, my dear child, and turn your thesis in every possible way; this shows a vein of the solid understanding of the poor *worthy;* it is always much better to know what we are doing, than to live as if we were blind, deaf, and dumb.

By the bye, talking of deafness, I entreat you to make

the chevalier dread as much as I do, this sort of family disorder. Another by the bye, respecting family: M. de Lamoignon has obtained the reversion of M. de Nemond's post; it belonged to the late first president; the king has wrought this miracle; for *William* thought that the word *reversion* would kill him. I am delighted that our neighbour * has at length obtained this place, and will not die in his own. Your son is in a strange place, *Kaysers-Lautern* †; if this were a Breton word, it could not be worse. He tells us he is going to apply himself to reading; he is right, for it is a disgraceful thing to be ignorant; since he loves war, he must like the histories that treat of it; advise him to employ his time usefully while he remains in that strange city. But will he not pay you a visit? I shall be as much surprised as you to see him once more a firebrand with the tone of a commander: *God preserve him.*

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I AM quite of your opinion, my dear little sister; I assure you, I think no more of the deputation, since, to obtain it, I must have again become a courtier or a warrior. It was not properly settled, that, in order to attain this dignity, one of these qualities was absolutely necessary; and the moment I found it was so, I thought of nothing but retiring from the post to which I had been appointed, and returned more pleased than ever with my humble retreat; but I do not give up the pleasure of paying you a visit, which I long for more impatiently

* Christian Francis de Lamoignon, son of William de Lamoignon, first president of the parliament of Paris, was advocate-general, and afterwards president à mortier to the parliament of Paris.

† A town of Germany in the Lower Palatinate, upon the little river Lauter. It is also called Caselouter.

than I can express. Madame de Mauron* talks of a journey to Bourbon, as a settled thing, and intends to take her daughter and me with her: this journey does not yet form any part of my mother's plan; we shall see how Providence will arrange them both. I am glad that you are satisfied with your sister-in-law; I can assure you I envied her very much the pleasure of my mother's society, which I should infinitely have preferred to the mad gaieties of the states. We have paid our compliments to the new colonel, who has also written to us very prettily, to inform us of his new dignity; he seems as proud of it as a young man of his age must naturally be. God knows how heartily I wish him success; I wish it as much as I do health to his father, whom I embrace most affectionately, and you too, my lovely little sister.

LETTER DCCCCLV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 14, 1689.

If the chevalier read your letters, he would not seek for amusement in those that come from such a distance. What you told me the other day of Livri,—which we have lent to M. Sanguin, allowing him even to make a fountain there,—this whole passage, the one concerning madame de Coulanges, and even your expressions of regard, are animated and agreeable. I admire the sprightliness of your style in the midst of so much thorny, perplexing, overwhelming business; really, my dear child, all the admiration is due to you, and not to me. I am alone like a violet, easily concealed; I hold no place, no rank in the world, except in your

* M. de Sévigné's mother-in-law.

heart, which I esteem more than all the rest, and in the hearts of my friends. What I do is not difficult to perform; but for you, in the rank you hold, in the most brilliant and most populous province in France, to unite economy with the magnificence of a governor, is scarcely credible, and I cannot believe it will last long, particularly with your son's expenses, which every day increase. As these thoughts often disturb my repose, I fear that you, being nearer the abyss, are still more subject to painful reflections; this, my dear countess, is my only grief, for solitude is not at all irksome to me. Our pleasant visitors have left us; I have, at the same time, driven away my son and his wife; the former is gone to his aunt's, the other to pay a long-neglected visit. I have sent them both their different ways; this has pleased me highly: we shall meet again in two days, and shall relish each other's society the more. I am not indeed alone, for I am beloved in this country; I had a visit yesterday from two very pleasant men, both *Molinists*; I was not tired of them. I have books, workmen, fine weather; if my dear child were more comfortable, what, with the hope of seeing her again, could I desire?

I have written to the marquis, though I had before paid him my compliments of congratulation: I entreat him to read in that gloomy garrison, where he has nothing to do; I tell him that since he is fond of war, it is unnatural to have no inclination to see books on the subject, and to be acquainted with persons who excelled in the art. I scold him, I torment him, and I hope we shall work a reformation: this will be the first door he ever refused to open to us. I am not so uneasy at his being fond of his bed, knowing he will never fail in what concerns his fame, as I am at his being fond of gaming. I point out that this is certain ruin: if he

plays but little, he can lose but little; but it is a small rain that makes us wet through: if he plays often, he will find himself deceived, he must pay; and if he has no money, he must either forfeit his word, or break in upon his necessary expenses. We are unlucky too from ignorance; for, without being cheated, it happens that we almost constantly lose. In short, my child, it would be a bad thing both for him, and for you, who would feel the effects of it. The marquis, therefore, would be fortunate to have a taste for reading, like Paulina, who is charmed to learn and improve. Delightful, happy disposition! which places us out of the reach of ennui and idleness, two hateful monsters. Romances are soon read; I could wish Paulina to have some order in the choice of histories, that she would begin at one end, and finish at the other, and thus acquire a slight but general knowledge of every thing. Do you say nothing to her respecting geography? We will resume this conversation another time. D'Avila* is admirable, but we like him better when we are a little acquainted with what leads to that period, such as Lewis XII. Francis I. and so on. It is your place, my child, to govern and correct; it is your duty, and you know it. With respect to every thing else, I have no doubt that in a very short time you will make her very amiable and pleasing; good sense, and an earnest desire of obliging you, are sufficient.

You tell me you expected M. de Vins to dinner; had you not been apprised of it, you would have been astonished to see M. du Plessis behind him: he will relate his grievances to you; he has told them to me in part, and led me to expect the remainder. He seems to me

* Author of a History of the Civil Wars of France, which contains all the memorable events from the death of Henry II. in 1559, to the peace of Vervins in 1598.

cheated and duped with regard to fortune, and has so great an inclination to be rid of his *Dorimena*, that I could guess the rest, though he has assured me her honour is in no way impeached; God grant it may be so! This is very foolish nevertheless; for there are things which should be undertaken seriously and prudently; for instance, marriage. M. de la Fayette was married the day before yesterday, (Monday the 12th) and was to return to dinner at his mother's, and to sleep at M. de Marillac's; supposing then, as I believe, there is a young countess de la Fayette, you may think you hear your son say, "I have been dancing all night with madame de la Fayette; I have played at battledore, and a thousand other games, with her; I have run races with her." How this would surprise you! The young countess is very lively, and the marquis is one of her first friends. Our madame de la Fayette approves and wishes to imitate every thing the chevalier does; she loves and esteems him; but the chevalier's miserable gout renders him proud, and almost insensible to all my friend's advances. Here is a great deal of idle chat, my dear child; but I know you like it, and are not sorry that you have given me an afternoon's amusement.

LETTER DCCCCLVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 18, 1689.

Noble lady, have I not done well to send you the apostolic love-letter of the holy father to madame de Chaulnes? You make me remark, that he does not mention the Holy Ghost in the election of a pope; I had only observed the sincere avowal he makes of being indebted to France and the ambassador for his elec-

tion; this alone, added to the praises and friendship with which he honours our duchess, appeared to me worthy of attention. I have no fear that the Holy Ghost will be offended at being so little celebrated in the conclave; he knows very well, and so do we, that it is he who creates them: we, the disciples of providence, are not to be deceived, and we know by how many ways, how many agents, and how many wills, he constantly performs what he determines. I have a high opinion of the letter you are writing to M. Selletier, without knowing either the particulars or the subject; and I am persuaded that you make a very good use of this Holy Ghost, which has deprived you of Avignon. Your son appears to me an officer of great consequence; his place is enviable, and surpasses what you could have expected at his age; all the measures were so just and so well taken, that not a moment has been lost; no crosses, but the most agreeable circumstances, have attended him; in short, my dear, if you are not satisfied, I know not what will please you, and this company which you are going to sell seems to crown the whole. I plainly perceive that the marquis will remain some time at Caselouter: these winter wars are sometimes as useful as campaigns; we make ourselves known: the neighbourhood of Mentz is a confidential post; you wrote in this idea, since you have scruples about the courage which you display by your fire-side; it is the chevalier's society that has given you this martial disposition. I can fancy I see the poor gentleman with his paws across, like the lion with which you paid your court so well to the prince; but I am convinced that a winter in Provence, under your fine sun, will benefit his health surprisingly. I know, at least, that the last winters he spent at Paris were very severe. We have hitherto no reason to complain of this; there has been

no snow, no glazed frost, but fine sunshine: I walk every day, the woods are still very pleasant, and every thing so well planted and arranged, that it seems as if the leaves had fallen only that the sun might shine through the avenues, and that we might enjoy our rambles. I sung the other day,

Pour qui, cruel Hiver, gardes-tu tes rigueurs? *

I was delighted to find that it was not for you; but let us wait the conclusion, for you know that from the extremity of the horizon, may come *the most furious of the dreadful children of the North* †; you are but too well acquainted with him, he has committed dreadful ravages with you; but, under the name of Bise ‡, continue to enjoy his absence; this is a great advantage. You have given me an idea of a sound sleep, at the end of a long walk, which has very much pleased me; for in the number of thoughts that may agitate you, I am always afraid of your having no sleep after four in the morning, as I know has often been the case with you; such warm blood would but ill agree with Provence; I cannot recommend too strongly to you the care of your health, if you value mine, which is still excellent. I thought M. du Plessis would surprise you behind M. de Vins; here I expected you would be caught; but to be close-shaved, with large dirty boots, is a ridiculous contrast. He has written to me from Grignan, and is delighted with your goodness, your magnificence, and the charms of your little Paulina. What harmony there is throughout her person! what an animated countenance! what becoming vivacity! what fine blue eyes, with black eye-lashes! what a graceful easy figure! she must either

* For whom, cruel Winter, dost thou reserve thy rigours?

† From La Fontaine's fable of the Oak and the Reed.

‡ The north-east wind.

be striking or very interesting, I know not exactly which; pray tell me.

What say you to the example the king has set of melting down all his beautiful plate? Our duchess de Lude is quite in despair, she has sent hers; madame de Chaulnes her table and candlestick-stands; and madame de Lavardin the plate from Rome, convinced that her husband will not return there again: see if you can do any thing upon this occasion. I send you a letter from M. du Plessis, in order to fix your imagination; do not appear to have seen it, nor mention it to him; confine your censures to deceit and mercenary views, but say not a word of the *cow and the calf.* I sincerely pity the poor man: matrimony is a very dangerous disorder; *I had rather drink.*

I could not comprehend how my letter to madame de Janet could find its way back; the reason is excellent; I will keep it for the first time her husband dies, for I could say nothing else upon the occasion. You scold me for taking what you say too seriously; yet who could suppose that a man in Provence, where you are, could be well, when you assure me he is dead? I shall be more careful in future, even at a less distance than Provence. I have corrected you, at least, with regard to the commissions. I make them at the moment, and this is not like poor Janet's case, in which there is no loss but that of a letter. My dear child, I recommend you to take care of yourself, at these critical times; keep yourself quiet, if you love me. My son and his wife are both returned from their excursions; they appear so glad to find me here, that I pity them for having left me. My daughter-in-law has got the head-ache; she was overturned in her little journey, and received some bruises, and two of her beautiful horses, which were taken off, are lost, and no tidings are yet heard of

them: my son is very much vexed. The little household is in affliction. They will write to you on Wednesday.

LETTER DCCCCLVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, December 21, 1689.

I go back, my dear countess, to the place where I left off on Sunday. The beautiful little horses galloped away, without stopping for a considerable time, like youth when it is not held with a tight rein. At length, one was found at Vitré, in a farm: the people at Vitré were astonished at seeing this little creature at night, in a great heat, completely harnessed; and wished to gain some intelligence of her, respecting my son. Do you recollect the circumstance of Rinaldo's horse, which Orlando found running with his harness without his master? What an affliction! he knew not of whom to inquire; at length, he addressed himself to the horse: *Dimmi caval gentil, che di Rinaldo, il tuo caro signore, è divenuto**. I do not know Rubicano's answer; but I assure you that our two little animals are very frolicsome in the stable, to the great satisfaction *del caro signore*†.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is true that I received great satisfaction from the two little horses being again in good health in their stable; and still more, from your sister-in-law having quite recovered from her fall, after a head-ache for two days: such little accidents are useful, to make us

* Tell me, gentle steed, what is become of Rinaldo, thy dear lord.
† Of their dear lord.

know the value of being relieved from them. I think, my beautiful little sister, that you are not sufficiently affected at the king's goodness, in allowing you to sell your company. Here is your son promoted to the rank of a colonel, almost free of expense to you; he will have good winter-quarters, both as captain and colonel, till he finds some one who is disposed to give him 12,000 livres. This is all, I think, that you could have wished for upon the occasion. And what better could you desire for Paulina, than to see her honourably settled at your estate of Avignon, with a lover who adores her, and who was the first that sung her praises, and made her name known in foreign lands? Adieu, my charming little sister.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ THE YOUNGER.

I SWEAR to you, my dear sister, that I will never leave madame de Sévigné again; I fall down, I am overturned, my head is broken, the moment I leave her protection: but I am much more sensible to the prosperities of my pretty *cousin*, than to my own little misfortunes. I wish Paulina's days may be woven with gold and silk, but not that she may pass them with her Roman lover.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ CONTINUES.

COULANGES has written me a long entertaining letter; he must have written to you at the same time. He has sent me some verses, which I honour; for he introduces in them all the glorious periods of Rome, which I also honour; he is cheerful, contented, and the favourite of M. de Turenne*. How do you like this

* Louis de la Tour, prince de Turenne, died on the 4th of August,

name? He is in love with Paulina, requests the pope's leave to marry her, and entreats his holiness to give him Avignon, which he will restore to your family; she will be called the countess of Avignon. At length, he says, that old age surrounds him: he doubts of some things on account of certain calculations; but he maintains that he is not sensible of it, either bodily or mentally; and I, in turn, assure you that I feel as he does, and that I do myself justice only by reflection. I am more uneasy about your health than my own. How comes it, my dear child, that you are afflicted with colic, which compels you to keep your bed? You were not so ill at Paris; would not the waters Paulina took this summer be of service to you? I heard at Bourdelot, that the waters of Forges, with cooling medicines, are infinitely preferable to hot medicines, which thicken the blood, and add fuel to fire. You will, perhaps, laugh at these reflections; but do not treat them lightly, you who reason better than all the faculty: take coffee also into consideration; do you think it was injurious to you? This is dictated by my friendship and ignorance, and has no authority but experience.

I am very glad that you will have the chevalier's company this winter; you stand in need of this comfort: not because he sees my letters, this is a distempered taste; nor that it may pay my court to him; but he has applied the hundred thousand livres exactly in the way he ought to do; it was the intention of the founders to give him the means of pushing his fortune, and to turn his military taste to good account. He has fulfilled his duty in this respect; and, with regard to reputation, has surpassed the most sanguine expecta-

1692, of the wounds he had received the preceding day in the battle of Steinkirk. He was at Rome in 1689.

tions: I say this without intending to displease him; he has found as much money as he has been able to spend, though far short of what he deserved; but he would not even have remained here, if God had not stopped him short in his career; and it is for his melancholy fate that the marquis is to be pitied; for if it had been allowed its full extent, our child would have required no other assistance; but we must return to God submissively, and follow your maxims.

I ask you a thousand pardons, chevalier, for what I have taken the liberty of saying; why do you read my letters? *Do I speak to you?*

What say you to all the fine plate of the duchess du Lude, and that of many others, following the king's to the mint? The king's apartments have thrown three millions into trade, which all together must make a great circulation. Madame de Chaulnes has sent her tables, with her two candlestick-stands, and her beautiful gilt toilet. The abbé Bigorré has sent me the edict, with the increase in the value of money; ah! this it is that will enrich you, supposing your coffers are full. I have just written to M. de Lamoignon; I was willing to practise this stratagem, and content myself with a compliment; but I have repented.

Our readings are delightful. We have Abbadie *, and the History of the Church; this is marrying the lute to the voice. You are not fond of wagers; I know not how we could captivate you a whole winter here. You skim lightly, and are not fond of history; and we have no pleasure but when we are attached to our subject, and make it a business. Sometimes, by way of change, we read *les petites Lettres* of Pascal; good heavens! how

* Author of *la Verité de la Religion Chretienne.*

delightful they are, and how well my son reads them! I constantly think of my daughter, and how worthy of her this extreme propriety of reasoning would be: but your brother says, you find that it is always the same thing: ah! so much the better; can there be a more perfect style, more finely wrought, more delicate unaffected raillery, or more nearly allied to the dialogues of Plato, which are so very beautiful? And when, after the first ten letters, he addresses himself to the R. P.s, what seriousness! what solidity! what force! what eloquence! what a love of God and of truth! what a way of supporting it, and of making it understood! All this is to be found in the last eight letters, which are very different from the former. I am persuaded you never did more than glance over them, selecting the most beautiful passages; but they should be read leisurely. Tell me whether the marquis will not have good winter-quarters; this will be a consolation. I do not think that the chevalier will quite desert this regiment, or that M. de Montégut will discontinue his good advice to the young colonel.

END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

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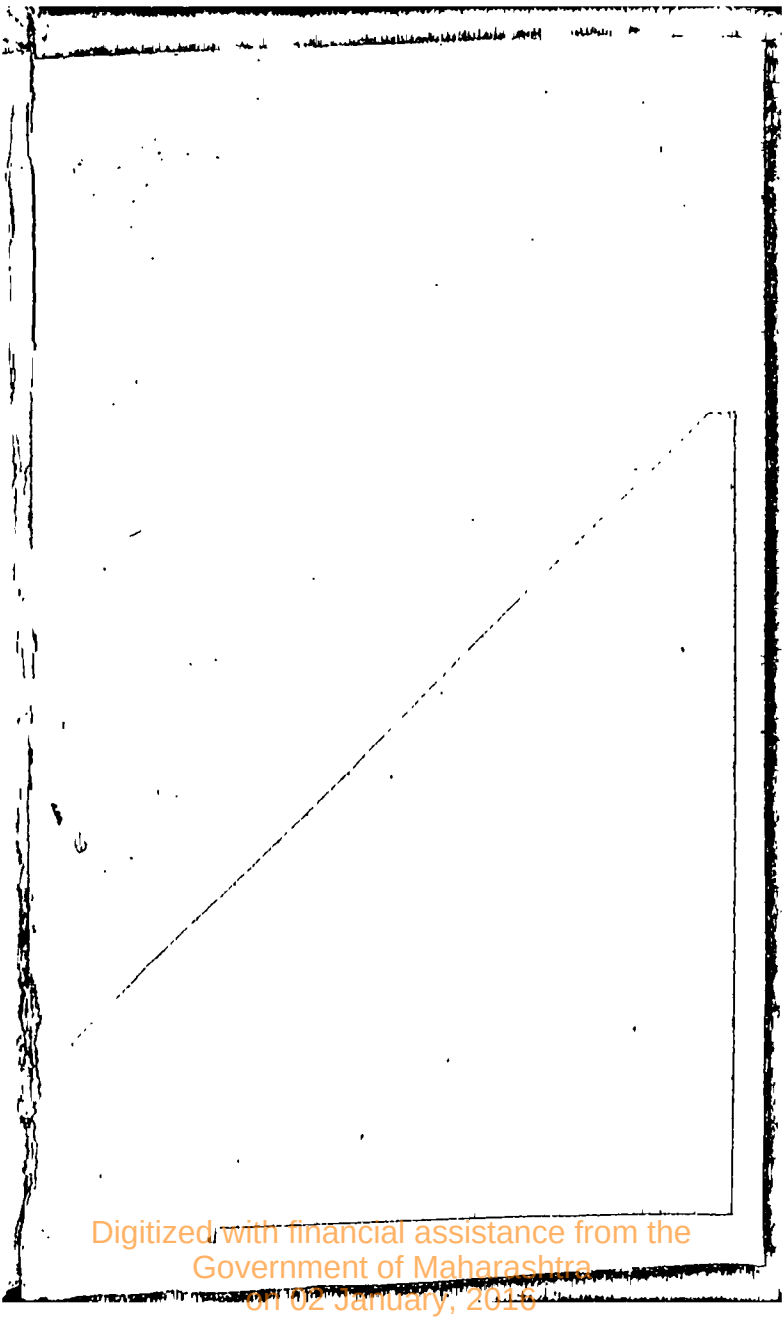

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